SERMONS

Preach'd on several Occasions,

BY

John March, B. D.

Late VICAR of

NEWCASTLE upon TINE.

The last of which was Preach'd the Twenty Seventh of *November*, 1692. Being the Sunday before he Died.

With a Preface by Dr. *John Scot*.

The Second Edition.

To which is added, a Sermon Preach'd at the Assizes, in *New-Castle* upon *Tine*, in the Reign of the late King *James*.

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THE PREFACE.

THE Reverend Author of the following Sermons, was a Person of that great Worth and Excellency, that among those who knew him, they need no other Recommendation than his own Name; for (besides that they carry in 'em a certain strain of serious and unaffected Piety, and this imbellished with such Clearness and Perspicuity, such strength and vigour of Expression, such solidity of Argument and Discourse, as must

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have rendered the perusal of them very pleasant and profitable to all well-disposed Readers; though their Author had been Anonymous) besides which, I say, the truly Pious and Learned Author of them was a Person of such great Accomplishments, both Moral and Intellectual, as would have justly given Credit, with all that knew his Personal Excellencies, to much meaner Performances than these. The main Objection this degenerous Age had against him was, that he was a faithful Son *of the* Church of England, *and a zealous Asserter of its Doctrine and Discipline; and one would think, for a Man to be true to his Profession, to that which he hath* ex animo *subscribed his Judgment, and declared*

red his unfeigned Aſſent and Conſent, it ſhould be ſo far from being reputed a Fault, in him, by thoſe who pretend either to common Honeſty, or Modeſty, that it ſhould rather be eſteemed his Glory and Excellency. As for his Converſation, it was in all reſpects ſo Sober and Regular, ſo Pure and Uncorrupt, as that though he had but little reaſon to apprehend himſelf concerned in that Denunciation, Wo be to you when all Men ſpeak well of you; *yet ſo far, as I ever heard, even thoſe who ſpoke worſt of him, durſt never beſpatter him with an Immorality. He was a very diligent Paſtor of the Flock committed to his Charge; and that not only in the courſe of his Publick*

Publick Miniſtry, from which without ſome neceſſary Occaſion he very rarely abſented himſelf, but alſo in his private Converſes: For beſides that, every Lord's Day in the Evening, he generally ſpent a conſiderable Portion of time in Inſtructing the Youth of his Pariſh, (from which Pious and Charitable Exerciſe, he very rarely ſuffered himſelf to be diverted, even by the Viſits of his beſt and greateſt Friends) beſides which, I ſay, his known Abilities in reſolving Caſes of Conſcience, drew after him a great many good People, not only of his own Flock, but from remoter Diſtances, who reſorted to him as to a common Oracle, and commonly went away from him intirely ſatisfied in his Wiſe and Judicious Reſolutions; and by

theſe

these his excellent Qualities and Labours, he hath not only purchased to himself a Crown of Glory in Heaven, but also so indeared his Memory upon Earth to all that are Virtuous and Good, that like the Leaves of Roses still retain their Fragrancy, though the Rose it self is withered and dead, and that being dead he may yet speak to his surviving Auditors, and that the Memory of his good Example and Doctrin, may ever flourish among them; it is the earnest desire of his Friends, that these Sermons of his may be made Publick, which though they have not that accomplished Accuracy as they would have had, had they had his last hand to them, and been prepared for the Press by his own skilful Pen, yet as they are, they are rightly worthy the Christian

Christian Readers perusal, and as such I recommend them to his View, and remain his

Affectionate and

Humble Servant,

John Scot.

SERMON

Est modus in rebus sunt certi
Quos ultra citraq; nequit consistere

Denique fines, Hor Sat 1 L 1 [illegible]
rectum

SERMON I.

Psalm lxxvi. 7.

Thou, even thou art to be feared; and who may stand in thy sight, when once thou art angry?

I Know no Motives nor Arguments more likely to awaken Sinners to their Duty, than a due consideration of Gods Infinite Goodness and Almighty Power. *Knowest thou not*, saith St. *Paul*, *that the goodness of God leadeth thee to Repentance?* Transcendently great is the Goodness of God towards poor Sinners. He freely gave us his Son to Purchase Heaven and Eternal Happiness for us: He sent down his Holy Spirit to dwell with us, that he might sanctifie our corrupt Natures,

and make us meet to partake of the vaſt Inheritance of the Saints in Light; and he excites us to a due improvement of theſe aſſiſtances of the Spirit by propoſing the moſt glorious Rewards of Heaven and Eternal Happineſs. Thus God draws Sinners to their Duty by the bands of Love and the cords of a Man, that is, by Arguments of ſuch an obliging Nature, as are moſt likely to prevail with men whom he hath endowed with Reaſon and Underſtanding. But how few are there who have ſo much ingenuity as to be won by kindneſs? The greateſt part of Mankind muſt be treated with ſeverer methods, according to the obſervation of St. *Auſtin*, *Plures ſunt quos terror corrigit, pauciores quos allicit amor*: *Such*, ſaith he, *is the corruption and degeneracy of our Natures, that very few are drawn to their Duty by the Bands of Love; the generality of men muſt be driven to it by the fears of Puniſhment.* For this reaſon the wiſer Heathens made *Hercules* their God of Power, their God of Eloquence too; intimating that no Arguments are more forcible or more prevalent than thoſe which alarm our fears. Now God, who is never wanting in any thing that may conduce to our Salvation, is obſerved

ſerved in Scripture frequently to urge theſe powerful Arguments upon us. *Fear not them*, ſaith our Saviour, *who can do no more than deſtroy the Body; but fear him who is able to deſtroy both Body and Soul in Hell. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we perſwade men*, ſaith St. *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 11. To the ſame end and purpoſe we find *Aſaph*, the Author of this *Pſalm*, magnifying the power of God in the defeat of *Sennacheribs* Army. *Thou haſt broken the Arrows of the Bow, the Shield, and the Sword, and the Battel*, ver. 3. *The Stout hearted are Spoiled, they have ſlept their ſleep, and none of the Men of Might have found their Hands*, ver. 5. *At thy rebuke, O God of* Jacob, *both the Chariot and Horſe are caſt into a deep ſleep*, ver. 6. Thoſe expreſſions of our Pſalmiſt relate unto *Sennacherib*, King of the *Aſſyrians*; this Monarchy, in *Daniels* Viſion, is, for its ſtrength, compared unto the Lion: and it was at its *Zenith* in the reign of *Sennacherib*, whoſe very name ſignifies a fierce Warrier, and whoſe Subjects, the *Aſſyrians*, are deſervedly ſtiled by our Pſalmiſt the Stout-hearted, becauſe, being fluſh'd by many Victories they feared neither Man nor God himſelf, whom they reviled

in a horrid manner, as appears by the Blasphemies of *Rabseca:* And yet even these stout-hearted *Assyrians* were spoiled; the Army of this great Monarch *Sennacherib* was miraculously defeated, either by the Pestilence, as *Josephus* reports, or by a destroying Angel, as the Scripture relates. Even *Sennacherib* himself, tho' then the greatest King upon Earth, was not able to stand in God's sight when he was angry; he came to a fatal end, and was slain in the Temple of his God by his own Sons. Nay farther yet, after his death he had a Statue erected in the Temple of *Vulcan*, with this pious Lesson inscribed on it, εἰς ἐμέ τις ὁρᾷων εὐσεβὴς ἔστω, that is in English, *Whosoever beholdeth me, let him learn Piety.* And since these things were so, our Psalmist had good reason to make this Epiphonema in the Text, *Thou, even thou art to be feared, and who may stand in thy Sight, when once thou art Angry?* From the words thus far explained, I shall take occasion to shew you,

First, That there is great reason to fear the Lord our God. And

Secondly, The vanity of those reasons which cause most men to shew so little fear of God in their Lives and Conversations.

First,

First, Let me shew you what great reason there is to fear the Lord our God, and this will appear at large by these particulars.

1st. We shall find reason enough to fear the Lord our God, if we consider his Sovereign Power over all Creatures, which he is able to command at his Pleasure, and make them revenge his Quarrel upon impenitent Sinners. As God Almighty by the bare speaking of a word created all things both in Heaven and in Earth; so he can with as much ease command all Creatures to execute his Wrath and Vengeance upon Sinners. It is the observation of the Eloquent *Tertullian*, that God, as soon as he had finished the great work of the Creation, did then, but not till then, assume the dreadful Title of Lord of Hosts. And it is further observed by others, that this Dreadful Title is mentioned in Scripture more than two hundred times, the better to deter Sinners from affronting Omnipotent Majesty. It seems the Sinner cannot make War with Heaven, but he must at the same time arm the whole Creation against himself; he cannot fight against the Almighty, but he must also fight against all those Creatures which

are under the Command of this Lord of Hosts. The Heathen Poet is able to tell us, πλειὴ μὲν γᾶ κακῶν πλειὴ δὲ θαλάσσα, &c. *All the Elements*, saith he, *are full fraught with Evils, and ready when God pleaseth to pour forth ruin and destruction upon Sinners.* *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* did no sooner kindle their impure flames, but the Element of Fire descending in sulphureous Streams, made them most dreadful Monuments of Eternal Vengeance. As soon as *Israel* began to murmur against *Moses*, the Element of Air mingled Pestilential Vapours with their Vital Breath, and chastised their Rebellion with a dreadful Plague. When proud *Pharaoh* gathered together all the strength of *Egypt*, and furiously pursued the Children of *Israel* to the *Red Sea*, the waters thereof soon swelled themselves into mountainous Billows, as if they had been proud to be imployed in the service of Heaven, and the destruction of the *Egyptians*. The Earth also, as dull and senseless as it seems to be, is yet able to resent such indignities as are offered to the Almighty; and when commanded by God, will open its devouring Mouth, and swallow down alive *Corah*, *Dathan* and *Abiram*. Thus all the Elements

ments are at Gods command, yea even rejoyce to be employed by Heaven, in executing Wrath and Vengeance upon Sinners. And whither now will the Sinner fly from this Lord of Hosts? Will his Alliance with Hell protect him from the Almighty? Or can he hope to hide himself from the heat of his fury in the shades below? No *certes*; he may as well seek Heaven in Hell as expect one single beam of comfort from these Regions of Darkness: for from these black quarters it was that God of old commanded an evil Spirit to vex *Saul*, and drew whole Legions of Devils to punish the degenerous *Jews* in the days of our Saviour. Nor does our God rule only in this sublunary World, in the Seas and in all deep places, but he ruleth also in the Heavens. For if the Almighty doth at any time frown upon the Sinner, each Planet will put on its Malign Aspect, and every Constellation shall foretel his destiny. Thus the Stars fought in their Ranks against *Sisera, and*, as *Josephus* reports, *poured down such prodigious showers of Hail, as served instead of Shot to destroy his Army*. Thus also the Sun and Moon became fixt Stars in Heaven, that the *Israelites* might not want the benefit of the

light to compleat their Victory over the *Amorites*. Thus the Elements, the Heavens and Hell it self are at the Command of Almighty God; and if there yet be wanting more Forces to fight these Battles of the Lord, the Angels are still remaining, those mighty Hosts of Heaven and standing Militia of the Almighty. Indeed God doth not always draw forth these *Trainbands* of Heaven; an Army of Lice serves sometimes to baffle a proud *Pharaoh*, and a silly Worm, when commissioned by God, is able to spoil the Divinity of a Blaspheming *Herod*: But when the King of Heaven appears, as it were, in Person against his Enemies; then these Courtiers of Heaven attend the Divine Presence, and putting on their Robes of Light, add what Lustre they can to the Majestatick Appearance. Hence it is that Christ, when he shall come at the last day to destroy at once all the Works of Satan, he shall not only have Angels for his Trumpeters, but *Matt.* 16. 27. he is said *to come in the Glory of the Father*, because he shall come attended with these Glorious Angels. And now when all these Battalions of the Almighty shall set themselves in array against the Sinner, when he shall not only fear with *Cain* lest he

fall

fall a prey to every Wild Beast, but with *Pashur*, in the Prophet *Jeremy*, becomes a *Magor Missabib*, that is, surrounded with fears from all parts of the Creation, then doubtless he will say with the Psalmist, *Thou, even thou art to be feared, and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?* Our Saviour in the Parable makes him more stout than wise, who having only ten thousand, is not affraid to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand: But sure every Sinner stands guilty of infinitely greater madness, who with his single valour dares the Almighty, and bids defiance to him, who comes not only with twenty thousand, but with the whole Universe against him. *O consider this all ye that forget God, lest he pluck you away, and there be none to deliver you:* Take our Saviours advice, send and sue for peace, whilst this Almighty Adversary is but yet on his way: Labour by your Prayers, your Fasting and Humiliation to reconcile your selves to this Lord of Hosts.

2*ly*, We shall find yet more reason to fear the Lord our God, if we consider seriously that great power he exercises over the Souls and Consciences of men. It is a true Saying of *Seneca*, *in*

if understood with respect to men, *In corpore exercentur supplicia, animus ipse sacer & æternus est, cui nequeat injici manus*: The Sword of Justice which Earthly Potentates carry before them as the Ensign of their Power, can only hurt the Shell of Man; insomuch that the greatest Tyrants are honoured in Scripture with no higher Titles than *those of Masters according to the flesh*: For the Soul or Spirit is far enough out of the reach of their Power, the Conscience is secure from their Rage and Fury; and it is the Prerogative Royal of God, as by his Omniscience to know the most inward thoughts; so by his Omnipotence to be able to punish them. When the Almighty pleases he breaks into the solitary Recesses of the Soul, and lodges his revenging Furies in the Inner Man. And now could we set a Casement upon the Breast of an *Orestes*, or some despairing Sinner, and there see those *ictus* and *laniatus*, those gnawings of the Worm which prey upon all the Vitals of the Soul, we should easily grant with *Tertullian*, that an inraged Conscience is *præjudicium judicii*, the Antedate of the last Judgment: we might then see Hell seizing the Wretched Sinner here upon Earth; at least inflicting some part

of

of its Torments on this side the Grave. Such a dreadful Monument of Vengeance was curſed *Cain*; no ſooner did he kill his Brother *Abel*, but he became a wretched Vagabond; he trembled at the ſight of every Beaſt, ſaith *Joſephus*, and was forced to bear ſuch incredible Torments, as he himſelf confeſſed *were greater than he could bear*. It is ſad enough for the *Sinner* to have God Almighty and the whole World againſt him, but his condition muſt needs be ſadder when he becomes a Traytor to himſelf, nay more, his own Tormentor. So much of Truth there is in that Saying of *Seneca*, *Nemini gravius imprecari potes, quam ut ſeipſum habeat iratum.* Thou canſt not, ſaith he, lay an heavier Curſe or imprecation upon any perſon, than to wiſh him angry, or at enmity with himſelf. And now, I hope, we will join with the Pſalmiſt in the Text, and ſay, *Thou, even thou, O Lord, art to be feared; and who may ſtand in thy ſight when once thou art Angry?* Fearful we are to offend an earthly King; how careful of our Words and Behaviour, leſt by Treaſon or any Miſdemeanour we fall under his Diſpleaſure? But what, I pray, are Gibbets, Racks, or the moſt ingenious Torments they can invent,

to

to the ſullen Laſhes, and ſilent Girds of an inraged Conſcience? Let *Solomon*, if you pleaſe, determin this matter, Prov. 18. 14. *The Spirit of a Man*, ſaith he, *can bear all his Infirmities, but a wounded Spirit who can bear?* How many noble Martyrs have ſung and danc'd amidſt the devouring Flames? But what *Judas*, what *Spira*, what daring Sinner, was ever yet able to bear the ſtings of a wounded Spirit? What reaſon then have we to fear the Lord our God, who can, when he pleaſes, wound our Spirits, and fill our Souls with the ineffable Torments of black Deſpair? But,

Thirdly, We ſhall find yet more Reaſon to fear the Lord our God, if we conſider thoſe moſt exquiſite and eternal Puniſhments he is able to inflict both on the Bodies and Souls of Sinners in the Lake below. If the bold Sinner has but courage enough to look beyond the Grave he will find prepared for him the eternal *Tophet*, ſuch a dreadful place of Torments, as is moſt tragically deſcribed by the Prophet *Iſay*, Chap. 30. 33. *Tophet is prepared of old*, ſaith he, *the Pile thereof is Fire and much Wood, and the Breath of the Lord, like a ſtream of Brimſtone, doth kindle it continually.* See how each word is armed with

with Thunder! It seems there is Fire in this eternal *Tophet*, yea there is a great Pile of Fire. Now how dreadful, how terrible is Fire? Which the *Persians* of old were wont to call, *immanissima bellua*, a most fierce and devouring Monster: And yet this Fire of *Tophet* is no ordinary Fire; it is no such material Fire as we have in our Chimneys. For the Scripture tells us, *it was originally prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* Now the Devil and his Angels being spiritual Beings, cannot be tormented by any material or corporeal Fire: The Fire therefore of *Tophet* must be some strange metaphorical Fire, such as the Fire we use is only fit to be made a cold and faint emblem of it; and we will the rather believe this, when we consider that it is said to be kindled by the Breath of Almighty God. The fiery Furnace of *Babylon* was dreadful enough, tho' kindled only by the finite power of an earthly King: How dreadful then must the Furnace of Hell be, which has all the Treasures of Torment infinite Wisdom could invent? If all this be not sufficient to make these Torments dreadful, remember that they are said *to be prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* We know these infernal Fiends are the most

moſt inveterate and moſt malicious Enemies of Heaven; ſuch as did not only at firſt endeavour to dethrone their Almighty Creator, but have ever ſince imployed all their malice and ſubilty to affront God, and draw Mankind into a conſpiracy againſt him. Sure then that Fire which was at firſt prepared for theſe inveterate and malicious Enemies of Heaven, cannot poſſibly want any ingredients of Torture, either Infinite Wiſdom could invent, or Infinite Power inflict: And yet ſuch devouring Flames as theſe, are not only prepared for the Devil and his Angels, but likewiſe for all impenitent Sinners. How fearful a thing then will it be *to fall into the Hands of the Living God*? And yet it will be more fearful, if we conſider the eternity of all theſe Torments. For, *in Hell the Worm never dies, and the Fire ſhall never be quenched.* When the Sinner has lain in Hell as many millions of Ages as there are Stars in Heaven or Sands on the Sea-ſhore, he will be no nearer an End of his Torments than he was the firſt Moment he entred into that place of Torments. *Who then will not fear the Lord our God? Who may ſtand in his ſight when once he is Angry?* But it ſeems our Pſalmiſt met with ſome in

his

his days *who had no fear of God before their Eyes: who did set their Mouths against Heaven, and bid defiance to the Almighty.* And are there not still too many in the World, who discover little or no fear of God in their Lives and Conversations, such, I mean, as are not afraid to spit in the Face of Heaven by their drunken Vomits, who profane his tremendous Name by Oaths and Blasphemies, deride his Ordinances, and break his Holy Laws, by their notorious Debaucheries? But sure these men have other apprehensions of the Majesty of Heaven than our Psalmist had; surely they frame to themselves such notions of a Deity, as allow them with *Jehu*, to drive on furiously in the ways of wickedness. It will therefore be a piece of Charity to undeceive these deluded Wretches, to shew them the weakness of those Principles they build upon, and the vanity of those Reasons which so much emboldens them in their evil Practices, and this was the Second General I proposed to speak to. And,

First, Atheism is one main Reason why many discover so little fear of God in their Lives and Conversations. As the Belief of a Deity is the Foundation of all Religion, and he that cometh unto God

God must first believe that he is, as S. *Paul* speaks, *Heb.* 11. 6. So, on the contrary, Atheism must needs be the spring and source of all Irreligion and Profaneness: Hence is that of the Psalmist, Psal. 14. 1, 2. *The Fool hath said in his Heart, there is no God*; and then follows in the next words, *they are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doth good.* But how well doth he deserve the Title of a Fool, who denies the Being of a God, which the whole Creation is one great evident and undeniable demonstration of? This vast and wonderful Fabrick of Heaven and Earth proclaims with a loud voice, the infinite Power and Wisdom of that Glorious Being which did at first Create it. For, as the *Roman* Orator observed of old, Should a Traveller come into a strange Country, and find some vast magnificent Palace there, tho' he should see nothing but Rats, Weasels, and such like Creatures in it; yet he would easily conclude some Wise and Skilful Architect had been there: even so *the Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his Handy-work*? Hence is that of S. *Paul*, Rom. 1. 20. *The invisible things of God, from the Creation, are clearly seen, being understood*

understood by the things that are made, even his Eternal Power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse. The Atheist therefore must needs be in a very dangerous condition, who denies that Almighty Being the whole Creation doth so loudly proclaim.

Secondly, Infidelity of the Scripture is another great reason why Men discover so little fear of God in their Lives and Conversations. Many there are that believe a God, who do not yet believe those dreadful punishments which are threatned in the Scripture, and therefore the hopes of impunity makes them run to all excess of riot. For when there is an evil heart of unbelief, there will be a departing from the Living God; hence is that advice of the Apostle, Heb. 3. 12. *Take heed, Brethren, lest there be in any of you an Evil Heart of Unbelief.* And what better remedy can there be of this Unbelief, than a serious consideration of those Miracles, which were wrought to confirm our Faith in the Gospel? For as Miracles are the highest Evidence Heaven can give; and the Truths of the Gospel have been confirmed by many prodigious Miracles; so these Miracles have been attested both by

Friends and Foes. The Universal Tradition of the Church, for more than 1600 years, cannot but be a very substantial Evidence of these Miracles to all Christians: and yet besides this, we have the concurrent Testimonies both of *Jews* and *Pagans*. *Josephus*, the *Jew*, reports of our Saviour, *that he went about doing good, and confirmed his Doctrin by Mighty Signs and Wonders:* Nay farther yet, *Pontius Pilate*, as *Eusebius* informs us, sent a large Narrative of our Saviours Miracles to *Tiberius Cæsar*, who laid them up among the Records of the Empire, and accordingly they are appealed to by the Antient Fathers. Let us not therefore be any longer faithless, but believing. We cannot have a surer Foundation for our Faith, than the Evidence of Miracles; and he must needs be a Miracle of Infidelity himself, who doth not believe those Miracles which were wrought by our Saviour, seeing they have been attested both by Friends and Foes, and confirmed to us, not only by *Christians*, but also by *Jews* and *Pagans*.

Thirdly, I shall name but one Reason more, why many men discover so little fear of God in their Lives and Con-

Converſations; and that is a dangerous opinion they have imbib'd of a ſtate of Annihilation after death. The Infamous Author of the Monſtrous *Leviathan* has ſadly debaucht this unhappy Age of ours, by teaching *That the Wicked after Death ſhall have no Reſurrection*: *no*, as he tells them, *they ſhall return to their Primitive Nothing*; *and have no more ſenſe of Pain than they had before they received their Being*. A Doctrin this, moſt fatal to Piety and Vertue! For if Wicked Men can once perſwade themſelves that they need not fear any ſeverer puniſhment after Death than that of Annihilation, then they will for certain run to all exceſs of Riot. For this, and no other was the uſe which was made of this pernicious Doctrin in the days of St. *Paul*; this and no other, was the language of *Epicureans* then, as you may read in 1 Cor. 15. 32. *If the Dead riſe not*, ſay they, *let us Eat and Drink, for to morrow we Die.* But what ſaith *Solomon* to ſuch Sinners as theſe, Eccleſ. 11. 9. *Rejoyce, O Young Man, in thy Youth, and let thy Heart chear thee in the days of thy Youth; walk on in the ways of thy own Heart, and in the ſight of thine own Eyes: yet know thou*

that for all these things God will bring thee unto Judgment. What a dismal day will the day of Judgment be to such deluded Sinners? They will then at least find this Doctrin of Annihilation sadly confuted, when they shall wish in vain, that they had never been born; and shall call upon the Rocks and Mountains to do them so much kindness, as to crush them into nothing. For certainly the gnawings of the Worm, and the unquenchable burnings of Fire denote another state than that of Annihilation. I hope by this time you will allow me to say with the Psamist in the Text, *Thou, even thou, O Lord, art to be feared.* Believe it, there is no contending with Almighty God Let the Potsherds strive with the Potsherds of the Earth, but wo unto him that striveth with his Maker. Cease therefore to do evil, and learn to do well; perfect Holiness in this fear of the Lord all the days of your lives, and then that God who is able to destroy you, will be found as able, and much more willing to save you for the Merits of your dearest Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom, &c.

SER-

SERMON II.

Revel. ii. 5.

I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy Candleſtick out of his place, except thou repent.

ST. *Jerom* ſays of this Book of *Revelations*, that it hath as many Myſteries as Words; and St. *Auſtin* gives a like Character of it, when he tells us, it will *exercere mentes legentium*, that is, ſet their Wits to work, who ſet themſelves to read it. But notwithſtanding all this, what is ſaid of the Scripture in general, is alſo true of this Scripture in particular: Namely, that tho' there be many Floods, yet there are many Fords, tho' there be many Depths where the greateſt Elephants may ſwim, yet there

are alſo ſome Shallows, where the leaſt Lambs will be able to wade. In ſome places the Holy Spirit ſoars aloft above the reach of the Higheſt, and in other places he ſtoops ſo low, as to condeſcend even to the Capacity of the Meaneſt: And ſo he doth here in the Text, where there are no difficulties to puzzle us, but plain things to inſtruct and direct us. The Text is a part of that Epiſtle which was ſent by Chriſt to the Angel of the Church of *Epheſus*. *Epheſus* was a large City, upon which depended ſeveral leſſer places, as the Learned *Hammond* and others obſerve. And according to that Government Chriſt had ſet up in his Church, there was an Angel or Biſhop conſtituted to overſee the Flock of Chriſt in theſe places. Hence St. *Auſtin*, ſpeaking of the ſeven Angels which are mentioned in this Book of *Revelations*, ſtiles them the Biſhops or Governours of theſe ſeven Churches. Such a Biſhop or Angel was ſet over the Church of *Epheſus*; and Antiquity tells us, *Oneſimus* was their Biſhop; to this Biſhop or Angel doth Chriſt ſend an Epiſtle, as may be learn'd from *ver.* 1 of this Chapter, *Unto the Angel of the Church of Epheſus, write.* The whole Epiſtle,

Epiſtle, beſides the Prologue and the Epilogue, conſiſts of four Principal Parts.

Firſt, A commendation of them for their Labour and Patience, and unwillingneſs to ſuffer them that are Evil, *ver.* 2, 3.

Secondly, A Reprehenſion, wherein they are blamed for leaving their Firſt Love, and abating ſomething of the Zeal and Fervour for the Goſpel of Chriſt, *verſ.* 4. And,

Thirdly, An Exhortation to things of great Importance here, in the beginning of the Text, *Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy firſt works.* And,

Fourthly, A Commination in the laſt words of the Verſe, *Elſe I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy Candleſtick out of his place.* For the fuller underſtanding of which words,

Firſt, We will firſt inquire why the Church of Chriſt is compared unto a Candleſtick.

Secondly, Shew you that this Candleſtick may be removed out of his place.

Thirdly, That it is an heavy Judgment to have this Candleſtick removed out of his place.

Fourthly, The Cauſes of this heavy Judgment. And,

Fifthly, The Means to prevent it. I begin,

First, With the first of these, Namely, to enquire why the Church of Christ is compared unto a Candlestick. That the Church of Christ is compared to a Candlestick, is plain from *Chap.* 1. 20. where we are told, that *The seven Stars are the Angels of the seven Churches; and the seven Candlesticks are the seven Churches.* And well may the Church of Christ be compared unto a Candlestick, since it holds forth the Word of God, which is so often compared unto a Light. *We have a more sure word of prophesie*, saith St. *Peter*, *whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light shining in a dark place.* 2 Pet. 1. 19. To the same purpose is that of *David*, Psal. 119. 105. *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.* The World indeed, of it self, is a very dark place, and stands in need of Light: It is a dark and dismal place, in respect of those manifold troubles and miseries which infest this Life. Now the Word of God is a Light which helps to scatter and disperse these Mists of Trouble. So King *David* found it, Psal. 119. 50. *This is my comfort in my affliction; thy*

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word has quickned me. The whole world, ſaith St. *John, lieth in wickedneſs*; and it were impoſſible for us to find our way to Heaven without the light of God's Word. But God is ſo gracious, as to give us his Word to be *a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our paths.* How ought we then to prize and value the Church of God, which is no leſs than the Light of the World; without the direction whereof, we muſt have wandred up and down the Wilderneſs, and never have found out the way to *Canaan*! There is no Salvation out of the Church, *Nec erit illi Deus Pater, cui non eſt Eccleſia Mater*; *God,* ſaith St. *Cyprian, will not be his Father, who doth not own the Church for his Mother.* Had we been born without the Pale of the Church, we had been Aliens from the Commonwealth of *Iſrael*; Strangers to the Covenant of Promiſe, without God, without Chriſt, and without Hope in this World. Sure then we who are born within the Pale of God's Church, and enjoy the glorious Light of the Goſpel, ſhould rejoyce in this Light, and learn to Prize and Value it; otherwiſe we may be deprived of it, and loſe all the advantages thereof, as will appear by conſidering the Second General. *Secondly,*

Secondly, Which is to ſhew that this Candleſtick may be removed out of his place. This is plain from the words of the Text, where we have our Saviour ſpeaking thus to the Church of *Epheſus*, *Except thou repent, I will come unto thee quickly, and remove thy Candleſtick out of his place.* Chriſt's Church therefore may fail and be extinguiſh'd. But for the more diſtinct deciſion of this point, we muſt carefully diſtinguiſh of Chriſt's Catholick and Univerſal Church, and of ſome particular Church of Chriſt, ſeated in ſome particular Kingdom or Nation; as the Church of *England*, the Church of *Scotland*, the Church of *Denmark*, and the like. Now,

1*ſt*. It is certain in the firſt place, that the Catholick or Univerſal Church can never fail, and be totally extinguiſhed; this larger Candleſtick ſhall never be removed. We have ſeveral promiſes in Scripture, which aſſure us of the perpetuity of Chriſt's Church, and that it ſhall continue even unto the end of the World. So our Saviour promiſes his Apoſtles, Mat. 28. ult. *Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.* And again, Mat. 16. 18. it is ſaid, *that Chriſt has built his*

his Church upon a Rock, and the gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it. Thus firm and ſtable is the Catholick Church, as St. *Chryſoſtom* ſpeaks elegantly, *It may be aſſaulted, but not defeated; it may be diſtreſſed, but not deſtroyed; it may be wounded, but it ſhall not fall; it may be toſſed, but not wreck'd; it may, and ſhall be militant, but yet never be overcome.* But,

2*ly.* Tho' the Catholick and Univerſal Church be thus ſtable and perpetual, yet no particular Church can claim this priviledge: The Church of any particular Place or Nation, may utterly fail, and have its Candleſtick removed from it. This is threatned in the Text to the Church of *Epheſus*, and has been the ſad fate of ſeveral other particular Churches. For where are thoſe many Famous Churches in *Africa*, which were ſo glorious and flouriſhing in the days of St. *Auſtin*? Where are thoſe ſeven Golden Candleſticks, thoſe ſeven Famous Churches of *Aſia* St. *John* mentions in the three firſt Chapters of this Book of *Revelations*? Are they not utterly ruin'd and deſtroyed? And dwells there any thing in theſe places but Ignorance, Barbarity and Mahumetaniſm? Thus ye ſee it

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is moſt plain, that tho' the Catholick ſhall never fail, yet the Church of any particular Place and Nation may. Tho' he will not remove his Candleſtick quite out of the World, but will always have a Church in ſome place or other; yet it is not certain it ſhall be in this or that Nation: He may remove his Candleſtick from *England*, or *Holland*, or any other particular Nation, which has filled up the meaſure of their Iniquity. In ſuch a caſe he deals with them as our Saviour threatens to deal with the *Jews*, Mat. 21. 43. *Therefore I ſay unto you, the Kingdom of God ſhall be taken from you, and given to a Nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.* Thus Chriſt threatned, and becauſe the *Jews* did not repent, he dealt with them accordingly; for they are now become *Loammi*, no more a People, but wrath is come upon them to the uttermoſt. I cannot diſmiſs this point, without an Inference or two. And,

1*ſt*. If every particular Church may fail, then the Church of *Rome* is vain in boaſting ſo much of her Perpetuity and Indefectibility. We know ſhe is but a part of the Catholick Church, and a very corrupt part of it too; and therefore in vain do they fancy, *that the*

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gates of Hell ſhall never prevail againſt them. St. *Paul* gives them better advice, Rom. 11. 21, 22. *Be not high minded, but fear; for if God ſpared not the natural branches, take heed leſt he alſo ſpare not thee.* This Epiſtle, ye know, is written to the Church of *Rome*; and if this Church of *Rome* had been Infallible and Perpetual, St. *Paul* had mightily fail'd in his Logick; for he makes them ſubject to the ſame fate which befell the *Jews*, and that they might fail as well as they had done.

2*ly.* Since particular Churches may fail, then this ſhould make them ſtudy their preſervation, and uſe ſuch means as may be effectual to that purpoſe. If the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity, in any Nation, ſhall become vain in their imaginations, exchanging plain and wholeſome Truth, for fond Speculations and Opinions; if they ſhall turn Factious and Schiſmatical, neglecting their Spiritual Guides and Paſtors; if they be Diſſolute in their Manners, and confute their Religion by their Lives; they will provoke God to remove his Candleſtick, and bring confuſion upon them. Chriſt is ſo far from promiſing ſafety and protection to any particular Church and People, who neglect their own ſafety that

that he threatens ruin and deſtruction to them, *except thou repenteſt, I will come unto thee quickly, and remove thy Candleſtick out of his place.* How careful then ſhould we, of this Nation, be to preſerve the Goſpel among us, leſt God carry it away from us unto a People that will better bring forth the fruits thereof? And to excite us all to this ſtudy and carefulneſs, I proceed in the third place to,

Thirdly, Shew you, that it is an heavy Judgment to have this Candleſtick removed out of his place. It is in the Text threatned as an heavy Judgment to the Church of *Epheſus*, *Except thou repent*, ſaith Chriſt, *I will come unto thee quickly, and remove thy Candleſtick out of his place.* So our Saviour threatens it as an heavy Judgment unto the *Jews*, Mat. 21. 43. *Therefore I ſay unto you, the Kingdom of God ſhall be taken from you, and given to a Nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.* And the greatneſs of the Judgment will appear at large from theſe following particulars.

1*ſt.* It deprives a Nation of its chiefeſt Honour. As it is the higheſt Honour in this World to be related to an Earthly King, ſo it is a much higher Honour

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to be related to the King of Kings. Hence is that of the Prophet *Isay*, Chap. 43. 4. *Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable.* Now all this Honour is lost, when once a Nation loseth its Relation to God. Thus God dealt with the *Jews*, Hosea 1. 9. *Then said God, call his name Lo-ammi, for ye are not my People, and I will not be your God.* When God removes his Candlestick, and rejects a Nation from being his People, they become then as contemptible as *Heathens* and *Infidels*, as vile and despicable as the *Jews* have been in the World ever since God disowned them for his People.

2*ly*. This heavy Judgment does also deprive a Nation of God's special care and providence. We know God's Church and People are as dear to him as the Apple of his Eye; and he is, as he has promised, *a Wall of Fire round about them.* Now a Wall of Fire is both Defensive and Offensive, and denotes that God by his special Providence does not only defend his chosen People, but also offends and destroys their Enemies. Behold, saith the Psalmist, Psal. 33. 18. *Behold*, take notice of this, saith he, namely, *that the Eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him:* Of these he takes

takes a ſpecial Care, and exerciſes a moſt tender and watchful Providence over them, *to deliver their Soul from Death, and to keep them alive in the time of Famine:* thus happy are the People *whoſe God is the Lord.* But if by our Sins we provoke God to remove our Candleſtick out of his place, and reject us from being his People, then ſhall we loſe our right and title to this his ſpecial Care and Providence; we ſhall ſoon then become a prey unto our Enemies, a reproach and by word to all that are round about us. When the Jewiſh Nation had filled up the Meaſure of their Iniquity, a Dreadful Voice was heard in their Temple, ſaying, *Migremus hinc, migremus hinc,* let us go hence, let us go hence; intimating that God and his Holy Angels were then departing from them, and withdrawing their Care and Providence over them: And preſently after this the Abomination of Deſolation was brought upon them, ſo that they have ceaſed ever ſince, not only to be the Church and People of God, but alſo to be a Nation; being ſcattered and diſperſed up and down the World, and hated in all places. But this will appear yet farther.

3*ly.* To

3*ly.* To be an heavy Judgment, if we conſider that the Holy Ghoſt in Scripture, eſteems it an heavier Judgment than others are. Adverſity and Oppreſſion are heavy Judgments, and yet but light in compariſon of this. So much may be gathered from Iſaiah 30.20. *Tho' the Lo d give you the Bread of Adverſity, and the Water of Affliction: yet ſhall not thy Teachers be removed into a corner any more; but thine Eyes ſhall ſee thy Teachers, and thine Ears ſhall hear a Voice behind thee, ſaying, this is the way, walk in it.* Tho' oppreſſion and Adverſity be heavy burthens, yet are they nothing to the loſs of Teachers, and the deprivation of God's Ordinances. So long as God's Candleſtick ſhines amongſt us, and we enjoy the great advantages of Prayers, Sermons and Sacraments, other Judgments may the better be diſpenſed with. Famine is another very ſore Judgment; when this rages, God is ſaid *to march through the Land in indignation*, Hab. 3 12. and we will not ſtick to believe it, when we conſider the direful effects and conſequences of Famine. We read in our Chronicles that there was formerly ſuch a dreadful Famine in this Iſland, that when Malefactors were lead out of Priſon towards

the place of Exeeution, the poor hungry People would preſently fall upon them, and tearing them in peices, eat them up. And we will not wonder at it, when we read Ezek. 5 10. *Of Fathers eating up their Sons, and Sons their Fathers*: And which is ſtanger and more unnatural yet, we find Lamen. 4 10. *Tender compaſſionate Women*, forced by the extremity of hunger, *to ſeeth their own Children.* Theſe are horrid inſtances of a dreadful Judgment, and yet we have a ſadder inſtance of it; and Famine is ſaid to be ſuch a devourer, as cauſes a man to devour himſelf, as you may read Iſai. 9.20. where every man is brought in *eating the Fleſh of his own Arm.* Thus great and heavy a Judgment is Famine; yea, by ſome it is thought to be one of the ſoreſt Heaven can inflict; and yet it is inferiour to this of the Text, when God in wrath *removes our Candleſtick out of his place*; when he takes his Goſpel away from us, and deprives us of all the priviledges and advantages of his Holy Ordinances. No leſs than this is aſſerted, Amos 8. 11, 12. *Behold, the days come, ſaith the Lord God, that I will ſend a Famine in the Land, not a Famine of Bread, not a thirſt of Water, but of hearing the Word of the Lord,*

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And they ſhall wander from Sea to Sea, and from the North *even to the* Eaſt *ſhall they run to and fro, to ſeek the Word of the Lord, and ſhall not find it.* Thus a Famine of the Word is a ſorer Judgment than the Famine of Bread; and well indeed it may, ſince the one deſtroys only the Body, the other deſtroys the Soul. If the Light of the Goſpel be taken away, worſe than *Egyptian* darkneſs will enſue, ſuch as will cauſe us to fall, and that into the bottomleſs Pit, from whence there is no Redemption. Thus I have diſpatched the three Generals, and ſhewn you that 'tis an heavy Judgment to have our *Candleſtick removed out of his place.* For this heavy Judgment deprives a Nation of its Chiefeſt Honour, and makes them become *Lo-ammi*, or no people: It deprives them alſo of God's ſpecial Care and Providence, and renders them an eaſie prey unto their Enemies. And, laſtly, it ſurpaſſes the foreſt of God's Judgments; and a Famine of Bread is far more tolerable than a Famine of the Word. Theſe Conſiderations, if any, will teach us to value God's Ordinances at an higher rate than formerly we have, and excite our greateſt care and diligence to prevent ſuch an heavy Judg-

ment as this; and to help us to perform this Duty the better, I come in the fourth place,

Fourthly, Briefly to consider some of those Causes which bring such an heavy Judgment upon a Nation. And

1*st*. Sin is the General Cause of this heavy Judgment; we need no other proof of this than the Text it self, where Christ bids the Church of *Ephesus remember from whence she had fallen, and repent, and do the first works*. Nothing but our Iniquities can separate betwixt our God and us; if we do not repent of them, they will be our ruin. For God will not continue his Gospel to a backsliding and disobedient People, but will take it away, and give it to a Nation that will better bring forth the Fruits thereof.

2*ly*. The contempt of God's Word and his Messengers is another Cause of this heavy Judgment. This may easily be gathered from 2 *Chron*. 36. 15, 16. Where we are told, that the Lord God sent to the *Jews by his Messengers, rising up betimes, and sending, because he had compassion on his People, and on his dwelling Place. But they mocked the Messengers of God, and despised his Words, and misu-*

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ſed his Prophets, until the wrath of the Lord aroſe againſt his People, till there was no remedy. So *Amos* 8. where the Prophet threatens them with *a Famine of the Word*, he aſſigns this among other reaſons, *ver.* 5. namely, becauſe *they prophaned his Sabbaths, and deſpiſed his Ordinances.* And indeed when a Nation undervalues the Light of the Goſpel, and judg themſelves unworthy of it, it is but juſt with God to remove their Candleſtick, and carry his Goſpel to a People more worthy of it.

3*ly.* Schiſms and Diviſions are another grand Cauſe of this heavy Judgment. Hiſtorians tell us, that this was it which opened the way to the *Turks* and *Saracens* to overflow the Eaſtern Churches, and let *Mahumetaniſm* into the World. It was this which brought that deluge of *Goths* and *Vandals*, and other barbarous Nations upon the *Weſt*: And indeed we need not wonder at it, ſince S. *James* tells us, Chap. 3. 16. *That where envying and ſtrife is, there will be confuſion and every evil work.* Thus I have diſpatched the fourth General, and ſhewn you ſome of thoſe Cauſes which provoke God to remove his Candleſtick from a People and Nation. Sin

in the General is the Cauſe of it: In particular the contempt of God's Meſſengers and his Ordinances, and thoſe Schiſms and Diviſions which rage in a Nation: And if we ſhould now reflect upon our ſelves, I fear we ſhould find ſo much wickedneſs and debauchery raging in the Land; ſuch groſs prophanation of God's Sabbaths, contempt of his Meſſengers and his Ordinances, and withal ſo many dangerous Schiſms and Factions amongſt us, as may juſtly cauſe us to dread the heavy Judgment of the Text. But I will not foretel your danger, but exhort you to prevent it, and that by Repentance as the Text directs. Which

Fifthly, brings me to the fifth and laſt General propoſed, which is, to ſhew you the Means to prevent this heavy Judgment. Now this cannot better be learned, than from that advice Chriſt gives the Church of *Epheſus* in this place *remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the firſt works.* Repentance therefore is the beſt means we can take to appeaſe God's Wrath, and prevent his Judgments. If we repent of the evil of our ways, God alſo will repent of the evil we have reaſon enough to fear he

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is bringing upon us. Hear what is ſaid to this purpoſe in the Prophet, Jer. 3. 12. *Return, O back ſliding* Iſrael, *ſaith the Lord, and I will not cauſe mine anger to fall upon you, for I am merciful.* What a gracious motive is here urged? What will perſwade us to repent, if the hopes of Mercy will not? In what a ſad condition ſhould we be, if God ſhould remove our Candleſtick out of his place; if he ſhould take away his glorious Goſpel from us, and deprive us of all the advantages and priviledges of his Holy Ordinances? Indeed our ſins call aloud for ſuch heavy Judgments. Our Superiours both in Church and State have acknowledged for us, that prophane Swearing, Perjury, Drunkenneſs, and a violation of God's Sabbaths, have ſadly made this Land to mourn. And may we not add, a great contempt of God's Word, a miſuſing of his Meſſengers, a ſlighting of his Ordinances, beſides thoſe Factions and Schiſms which abound among us? And may not God juſtly viſit for theſe things? Oh then it is time that we ſhould all ſmite upon our Breaſts, and return unto the Lord with humiliation and repentance, that our iniquities may not be our ruin, but every kind of

Repentance will not ſerve the turn: the Greek word in the Text is μετάνοια, which *Lactantius* tranſlates *mutationes mentis in melius*, that is, a change of the Mind from worſe to better; not a change of the Looks, or hanging down the Head like a Bullruſh, for all this may be done by a Phariſee or an Hypocrite. It is not a change of our Apparel, or a putting on of Sackcloath; for ſuch humiliation and repentance may be performed by a wicked *Ahab*; but the Repentance of the Text denotes a real change of the Mind; or as the Prophet *Joel* deſcribes it, *a turning unto the Lord with all our Hearts*, Chap. 2. 12. Such a Repentance as this, will make us fruitful in every good word and work, and pay an univerſal Obedience to all God's Commandments; it will make us reform our Lives, honour God's Goſpel, value his Ordinances, and have no hand in the encouraging thoſe Schiſms and Diviſions which are amongſt us: This is the Repentance Chriſt recommends; and if it be carefully Practiſed by us we may prevent the heavy Judgment of the Text, and procure the continuance of the Goſpel amongſt us; which God Almighty grant for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt, *&c.*

The Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the Love of God, &c. SER-

SERMON III.

2 Pet. iii. 28.

But Grow in Grace.

IT is a Famous Diſpute among Papiſts and Proteſtants, where St. *Peter* was when he wrote this and his former Epiſtle: The Papiſts would have him to be at *Rome*, that they may the better eſtabliſh their Papal Monarchy, and derive the Succeſſion of their Biſhops from that great Apoſtle. But St. *Peter* himſelf tells us that he was at *Babylon* 1 Pet. 5, 13. *The Church that is at* Babylon *elected together with you, ſaluteth you.* Indeed St. *John*, in his Book of the *Revelations*, takes *Babylon* in a myſtical ſenſe for *Rome*, which well became his prophetick

phetick and myſtical ſtyle; but there is no reaſon to believe that St. *Peter*, who, in theſe Epiſtles writes no Propheſie, but only plain Inſtruction, for the diſperſed *Jews*, ſhould take *Babylon* in any other than a Literal Senſe, namely for that Antient and famous City which was the Metropolis of *Chaldea*; and indeed there are ſundry Arguments to induce this belief. As,

Firſt, St. *Paul*, who about this time wrote this Epiſtle to the *Romans*, makes no mention at all of St. *Peters* being then at *Rome*, notwithſtanding he ſends Commendation to all that were of Eminency in the Church.

Secondly, It is agreed on by both Papiſts and Proteſtants, that the Apoſtleſhip of the *Jews* was in a peculiar manner committed to St. *Peter*, as that of the *Gentiles* was to St. *Paul*. This St. *Jerom* calls *Principale Mandatum*, the main of their Commiſſion; from whence it neceſſarily follows, that St. *Peters* chief imployment muſt be where the greateſt numbers of *Jews* were. Now it is certain that *Babylon* in *Chaldea* was the place where the *Jews* reſided in greateſt numbers after their Captivity.

Thirdly, St. *Peter* directs his Epiſtles to

to the *Jews* ſcattered throughout *Pontus*, *Galatia*, *Cappadocia*, *Aſia*, and *Bithynia*, which all belonged to the Juriſdiction of the Patriarch of *Babylon*.

Fourthly, St. *Peter*, writing to theſe diſperſed *Jews*, rehearſeth ſeveral Nations where they reſided, as *Pontus*, *Galatia*, *Cappadocia*, *Aſia*, and *Bithynia*, but leaves out *Chaldea*, where they reſided in greateſt numbers, which he would never have done, had not *Chaldea* been the place from whence he wrote theſe Epiſtles. I ſhall add but one Argument more, from *Acts* 18.2. where we are told, that *Claudius Cæſar* commanded all the *Jews* to depart from *Rome*; ſo that we may conclude St. *Peter* would not keep his reſidence there, where he wanted his Flock committed to his Charge; and therefore it is more rational to believe he reſided at *Babylon*, where vaſt numbers of the *Jews* reſided alſo. I have premiſed thus much to prove that St. *Peter* wrote theſe two Epiſtles from *Babylon* in *Chaldea*; becauſe it will follow from hence, that the Papiſts have not one Text of Scripture to found their belief of St. *Peters* being at *Rome*, tho' on it depends their whole Papal Monarchy: For this is the only Text they pretend to, and you ſee how little it makes

makes for their purpoſe, ſo that they have nothing but human Teſtimony to build this great Article of their Faith upon, and that ſuch as is derived from *Papias*, a weak, credulous perſon, as *Euſebius* ſtiles him. By this time you will in ſome meaſure underſtand the Place from which, and the Perſons to whom St. *Peter* writes; and being ſhortly, as he tells them, *to put off his Earthly Tabernacle*, we need not doubt the excellency of thoſe Inſtructions he bequeaths to the *Jews*: All which he concludes with the moſt important words of the Text, *Grow in Grace*. For the better underſtanding of which,

Firſt, We will firſt conſider the Duty it ſelf, *Grow in Grace*.

Secondly, We will enquire what is that degree or ſtature of Grace a Chriſtian muſt grow to before he can aſſure himſelf of Eternal Salvation.

Thirdly, Whether any farther growth in Grace be attainable in this Life.

Fourthly, What Reaſons and Encouragements we have to endeavour after the higheſt degrees of Grace. I begin with the firſt of theſe.

Firſt, Namely to conſider the Duty it ſelf, which is to *Grow in Grace*. A Chriſtians life muſt be a continual progreſs

greſs in Holineſs; he muſt not with *Hercules*, erect his Pillars, and write a *non ultra* upon them, ſaying hitherto will I go and no farther: for true Grace is of a growing and multiplying Nature; ſo that the good Chriſtian muſt not be content with his preſent attainments, but with St. *Paul*, he muſt always be preſſing forward, forgetting thoſe things which are behind, and reaching forth unto thoſe things which are before. To this purpoſe is that Character *Solomon* gives of the juſt Man, Prov. 4 18. *The Paths of the Juſt is as the Shining Light, that ſhineth more and more unto the perfect Day.* He is not like *Joſuahs* Sun that ſtood ſtill in the Firmament, much leſs like *Hezekiahs*, which went ten degrees backward; but he is like *Davids* Sun *which cometh forth as a Bridegroom out of his Chamber, and rejoyceth as a Giant to run his Race.* Now this growth in Grace denotes at leaſt theſe two bleſſings.

Firſt, The getting all ſorts of Graces; And,

Secondly, Serious endeavours after the higheſt degrees of them.

Firſt, This growth in Grace denotes the getting all ſorts of Graces. It is a known Maxim in Philoſophy, *auctо toto augetur quælibet pars*, in the Natural Growth

Growth of Plants, when the whole increaſeth, every part increaſeth alſo; and the Maxim holds in Spiritul Growths too: For all the Faculties of the Soul are improved together, and the New Creature muſt be adorned with all ſorts of Vertue. To this purpoſe is that ſaying of *Cicero*, *Omnes virtutes inter ſe nexæ conjugatæque ſunt*, all the Vertues, ſaith he, are linked and joyned together, ſo that he that has one, muſt have them all. Hence we find Chriſt's Spouſe in the *Canticles*, compared to a pleaſant Garden, which is adorned with great variety of Flowers, and perfum'd with all ſorts of Fragrant Spices; thus *the Kings Daughter muſt be all Glorious within.* The good Chriſtian that will grow in Grace muſt be poſſeſſed with all ſorts of Virtues, according to that exhortation our Apoſtle gives, Chap. 1.5. *Give all diligence*, ſaith he, *and add to your Faith, Vertue; and to Vertue, Knowledge; and to Knowledge, Temperance; and to Temperance, Patience; and to Patience, Godlineſs; and to Godlineſs, Brotherly Kindneſs, and to Brotherly Kindneſs, Charity.* All theſe Vertues muſt dwell together; and that man hath none of them, who has them not all in ſome degree and meaſure. But,

Secondly

Secondly, This Growth in Grace, as it denotes the getting all ſorts of Vertues, ſo it denotes our ſerious endeavours after the higheſt degrees of them. As the growing Chriſtian muſt add Vertue to Vertue, and pile one Grace upon another; ſo he muſt not ſit down with ſome lower attainments, but advance to the higheſt pitch and degree of every Grace. I need not tell you that there are ſeveral degrees in every Grace and Vertue, the number of which is variouſly reported by Learned Men. *Ariſtotle*, that Prince of Philoſophers, reckons but eight; *Gregory* the Great, fifteen; *Johannes Climachus* doubles the number, and makes them Thirty. But theſe Great Men do all fall ſhort of the truth, for there cannot be fewer than infinite degrees in every Vertue; ſeeing God Almighty poſſeſſes them all in infinite degrees of Perfection. Now this is the Pattern which is propoſed to the Chriſtians imitation: For as our Saviour ſpeaks, he muſt endeavour to be perfect even as his Heavenly Father is perfect. Sure then he muſt endeavour to grow very high, who is to grow as high as Heaven; he muſt not be content with low attainments, who is to imitate the infinite Perfections of the Divine Nature

ture. Thus the Righteous muſt hold on in his way, and he that hath clean Hands, muſt wax ſtronger and ſtronger, according to the advice of St *Jerom*; it muſt be his conſtant ſtudy to *grow in Grace* as he grows in Years. Like the Vine to which the Holy Ghoſt ſo frequently compares him, he muſt know no other period of his growth, than that of his Life; and like *Caleb*, muſt be active and vigorous, even at eighty years of Age. The ſerious Chriſtian ſtill finds ſomething that needs to be amended; ſomething alſo decayed he muſt be careful to repair, and ſomething not yet attained he muſt preſs hard after. As the diligent Bee flies from Flower Flower, that it may gather greater plenty and abundance of Hony; ſo the ſerious Chriſtian goes from Duty to Duty, and from Ordinance to Ordinance, out of a longing deſire to gain higher degrees of Grace. To this purpoſe is that Character the Pſalmiſt gives of a Righteous Man, Pſal. 92. 12. &c. *The Righteous ſhall flouriſh like the Palm-Tree; he ſhall grow like a Cedar in* Lebanon; *thoſe that be planted in the Houſe of the Lord, ſhall flouriſh in the Courts of our God. They ſhall ſtill bring forth Fruit, yea even in Old Age; they ſhall be fat and flouriſhing*

flouriſhing. What elegant and ſignificant Expreſſions are theſe! Here is not only mention of growing, but of Flouriſhing too, and here is Flouriſhing mentioned no leſs than three times, and it is the flouriſhing not of an ordinary Tree, but of a Palm tree, which is famous for its Flouriſhing under the heavieſt burthens: Nay further, it is flouriſhing like a Cedar, and that not growing in a barren Wilderneſs, but in *Lebanon* it ſelf, where the Beſt, the Goodlieſt, the Talleſt Cedars grew: Nor is he ſaid only to Flouriſh in Boughs and Leaves, but alſo in Fruit; and that not for one year only; but the Righteous Man is ſtill bringing forth Fruit, and that not only in the Years of his Youth, or the beginning of Grace, but in Old Age too. What a Divine Climax, what an Elegant Gradation is here uſed by the Holy Ghoſt to repreſent the continual growings of a Righteous Man in Vertue! He is ſtill climbing higher and higher, till he climbs as high as Heaven. Thus have I conſidered the Duty it ſelf, *Grow in Grace:* And come now in the Second place,

Secondly, to enquire what is that Degree or Stature of Grace a Chriſtian muſt grow to, before he can aſſure himſelf

ſelf of Eternal Salvation. I have ſhewn already, that the degrees of Grace and Vertue are no leſs than Infinite; ſo many indeed, that the beſt of Chriſtians may more eaſily endeavour after them than ever perfectly acquire or attain them. But notwithſtanding all this, there are certain degrees of Grace, which muſt be attained to, before a Chriſtian can have any comfortable aſſurance of his Eternal Salvation. There is ſuch a ſtate of Holineſs and Perfection he muſt grow to in this Life, before he can have any evidence of his Title to a better Life. Now for your better information in this important Point, I ſhall ſhew you theſe two things.

Firſt, That there is a certain growth in Grace attainable in this World, which is ſufficient to aſſure us of Eternal Salvation.

Secondly, What this ſaving growth in Grace imports.

Firſt, Let me ſhew you, that there is a certain growth in Grace attainable in this World, which is ſufficient to aſſure us of Eternal Salvation. *Solomon* tells us, Prov. 4. 18. *That the Path of the Juſt is as the ſhining Light, which ſhineth more and more unto the perfect Day.* There is therefore a perfect Day of Grace the Juſt Man may arrive at; and this

this will receive farther light from those Elegant Expressions of our Apostle, 2 Pet. 1. 19. *We have*, saith he, *a more sure word of Prophesie, whereunto ye do well, that ye take heed, as to a Light shining in a Dark Place, until the Day dawn, and the Day-Star arise in your Hearts.* It is plain from hence, that the Day-Star of Grace doth arise in the Hearts of Believers in this Life, such as will be sufficient to bring us to Heaven. It is yet a clearer proof of this, which you'l find *Ephes.* 4 11. where St. *Paul* tells us, that Christ at his Ascention gave *Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers*, for the edifying of the Church, and the perfecting of the Saints, till we all come in the unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: From hence it is plain, that there is a just and full stature Christians may grow to in this Life; they may come to the Perfect Man, that is, to such degrees of Grace, to such a state of Evangelical, tho' not Legal or Absolute Perfection, as will be sufficient to carry them to Heaven. As in natural growths Men have a fixt and determinate stature to which they arrive;

ſo in ſpiritual growths there is a certain ſtature too, which, when we arrive at, we become perfect Men, and Compleat Chriſtians, that is, ſuch as are infallibly in a ſtate of Salvation.

Thus I have ſhewn you, that there is a certain growth of Grace attainable in this Life, which is ſufficient to aſſure us of Eternal Salvation. I come now in the ſecond place to ſhew you, what this ſaving Growth in Grace imports, and that both Negatively and Poſitively. And,

1*ſt*. It doth not import an abſolute freedom from all ſin, but is conſiſtent with ſins of ignorance and infirmity. There is no ſtate of abſolute perfection on this ſide the Grave; for there is Dung in all our Sacrifices, and our very Righteouſneſs is as filthy Rags. As the beſt Grain hath its Chaff; and the brighteſt Marble its Spots and Flaws; ſo the beſt of Chriſtians want not a mixture of ſin; and the higheſt Saints have ſome allay of Original Corruption. Hence *Solomon* tells us, that *the juſteſt man falls ſeven times a day*; and St. *John*, tho' the beloved Diſciple, comprehends himſelf in thoſe expreſſions of his, 1 *John* 1. 8. *If we ſay that we have no ſin, we deceive our ſelves, and the Truth is not in*

in us. Plain therefore it is, that ſins of ignorance and infirmity are conſiſtent with this ſaving growth in Grace.

2*ly.* This ſaving growth in Grace, is alſo conſiſtent with ſome falls into wilful and preſumptuous ſins. Thus *David*, a man after Gods own Heart, was guilty of Pride in Numbering the People; of Adultery alſo and Murder, which he himſelf calls preſumptuous ſins; and yet recovered himſelf into a ſtate of Salvation, by this timely Repentance. Thus alſo the Prodigal, in the Parable, was upon his Repentance, reinſtated in his Fathers Favour: ſo that willful and preſumptuous ſins, if repented of, are conſiſtent with this ſaving growth in Grace.

3*ly.* Saving growth in Grace denotes ſuch an habitual obedience to all God's Holy Laws, as allows no continuance or practice in any known ſins. St. *John* gives a true Character of a Child of God, 1 John 3. 9. *Whoſoever is born of God*, ſaith he, *committeth not ſin*, that is, he doth not live in the practice of any known willful and deliberate ſin: And this he illuſtrates by the contrary Character, of a Child of the Devil, verſ. 8. *He that committeth ſin, is of the Devil, for the Devil ſinneth from the*

beginning, that is, goes on in a constant trade and practice of wickedness without repentance. He therefore that is a Child of God, and has attained to a saving growth in Grace, is one that doth not sin after this manner; through the main tenor of his Life he pays a sincere obedience to all the Laws of God; his Actions are generally innocent and laudable; and when at any time, like *David*, he falls into presumptuous sins, as he doth so very seldom, so he always declares his abhorrence of them by a speedy and suitable repentance. Thus I have dispatched the second General, and shewn you what is that degree or stature of Grace a Christian must grow to, before he can assure himself of Eternal Salvation. I come now in the third Place to inquire,

Thirdly, Whether any farther growth in Grace be attainable in this Life, than what is just necessary to eternal Salvation: And indeed if it were not so, all God's Saints would be of the same size and stature, they would all be equal as to their degrees and measures of Grace. But, tho' all of them have enough to carry them to Heaven, yet there is a difference in their attainments, and some, like *Saul*, are taller than the rest by the

Head

Head and Shoulders. For every Saint has not the pleriphory or ſtrong Faith of *Abraham*, the Meekneſs of *Moſes*, the patience of *Job*, the zeal of *Joſiah*, the temperance of *Timothy*, or the diligence of St. *Paul*, who is ſaid to have *laboured more abundantly than the reſt of the Apoſtles*. All indeed have ſo much Grace as is neceſſary to Salvation, yet it ſeems they have not all the ſame eminent degrees and meaſures of Grace. Some with their Pound, do only gain five; others by their greater diligence, gain ten pounds, as we have it in the known Parable: And for this reaſon God is pleaſed to promiſe higher degrees of Glory, proportionable to thoſe higher degrees of Grace men attain to in this Life. Some ſhall have their *Aureolæ*, as the Schoolmen ſpeak, that is larger Crowns of Glory than ordinary Saints ſhall wear, and thoſe adorned with peculiar Enſigns of Honour, as St. *Paul* tells us, 2 Cor. 9. 6. *He that ſoweth ſparingly, ſhall reap ſparingly*; *and he that ſoweth abundantly, ſhall reap abundantly*; both it ſeems ſhall reap and receive the rewards of their pious labours, but yet in different degrees, according to their different ſervices in this World. He that gains but five

Pounds ſhall be made Ruler over five Cities; whilſt he that gains ten Pounds ſhall be made Ruler over ten Cities. There is therefore a further growth in Grace attainable in this Life, than what is juſt neceſſary to Salvation. The Chriſtian therefore, who hath arrived at this ſaving growth in Grace, is bound ſtill to advance higher, and endeavour after further Improvements in every inſtance of Vertue: For we are enjoyned, not only to do the Work of the Lord, but to abound in it; not only to grow in Grace, but alſo to grow till we be perfect, even as our Heavenly Father is perfect. Here therefore is work enough cut out to employ all our faculties for ever; and tho' we ſhould be growing in Grace to all Eternity, we ſhall ſtill fall ſhort of that Infinite Standard of Perfection, whereunto we are obliged to aſpire. But tho' we are not able to reach the Infinite Perfections of God, yet by our greater watchfulneſs over our ſelves, by our more frequent Faſtings, fervent Devotions, zealous attendance on Ordinances, and eminent works of Charity; by theſe and ſuch like Heroick Exploits, we ſhall more nearly reſemble God, and obtain a larger ſhare of Happineſs: Whereas thoſe that content

content themſelves with ſuch a lower growth as is juſt neceſſary to Salvation, ſhall not indeed forfeit Heaven, but only thoſe higher degrees of Happineſs which are to be enjoyed there. Thus I have diſpatched the third General, and ſhewn you, that there is a further growth in Grace attainable in this Life, than what is juſt neceſſary to Salvation. I come now,

Fourthly, In the fourth place to ſhew you what Reaſons and Encouragements we have to endeavour after the higheſt degrees of Grace. And,

1*ſt*. Our ſerious endeavours after the higheſt degrees of Grace, will be an excellent means to preſerve that ſaving growth in Grace the pious Chriſtian has already attain'd to. There is a dangerous Opinion in the World, that a man cannot totally and finally fall away from Grace. According to theſe mens ſentiments, he that is once ſincerely Righteous, will infallibly hold on and perſevere unto the end. Now if this Opinion were true, this exhortation would be vain. But certainly nothing can be more contrary to the plain Doctrine of the Scripture: Hear what St. *Peter* ſaith, Chap. 1. of this Epiſtle, verſ. 10. *Give all dilligence*, ſaith he, *to make your Calling*

ling and Election ſure; for if you do theſe things you ſhall never fall. You ſee he puts an *if* in the caſe, ſuch as fairly implies, that we may neglect our Duty, and fall from our own ſtedfaſtneſs. For the ſame reaſon St. *Paul* gives this neceſſary Caution, Rom. 11.20.&c. *Be not high-minded, but fear; for if God ſpared not the natural branches, take heed leſt he alſo ſpare not thee.* Behold therefore the goodneſs and ſeverity of God; on them which fall ſeverity; but towards thee goodneſs, if thou continue in his goodneſs; otherwiſe thou alſo ſhalt be cut off. But a fuller confutation of this dangerous Opinion we cannot deſire, than what may be gathered from the words of the Prophet, Ezek. 18.24. *When the righteous man turneth away from his righteouſneſs, and committeth iniquity, and doth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doth, ſhall he live, ſaith the Lord?* No, *All his righteouſneſs that he hath done ſhall not be mentioned; in his treſpaſs that he hath treſpaſſed, and in his ſin that he hath ſinned, in them ſhall he die.* Thus plain it is, that a Chriſtian may fall away from that ſaving ſtate of Grace he has attained to. And what, I pray, is more likely to ſecure his ſtedfaſtneſs than

than ſerious endeavours after the higheſt degrees of Holineſs? Our Apoſtle, it ſeems, thought ſo; for having in the foregoing Verſe given this neceſſary Caution, *Beware, Brethren, leſt you fall from your own ſteadfaſtneſs*; he preſently ſubjoins in the Text, as the propereſt means to ſecure them from falling, but *grow in Grace*. It is the ſame in ſpiritual growths, that it is in naturals: For as a man by eating and drinking, and other natural Actions, preſerves his natural Life; ſo the Chriſtian, by ſerious endeavours after higher degrees of Holineſs, preſerves his ſpiritual Life. The Muſician ſcrews up his Peg to an higher pitch, that he may be ſure it will not fall lower than the true Note: Even ſo the higher degrees of Perfection we aſpire to, the leſs danger ſhall we be in of falling lower, than what is abſolutely neceſſary. And this certainly is ſufficient encouragement to continue theſe our ſerious endeavours.

2*ly*. Theſe ſerious endeavours after a further growth in Grace, than what is abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation, will give the pious Chriſtian a more comfortable aſſurance of Eternal Happineſs. It is no doubt, a kind of Heaven upon Earth to be aſſured of Heaven whilſt we

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are here upon Earth. This is that hidden Manna mentioned in the *Revelations*, which fills the Soul with all variety of Delights. Now, nothing besides a particular Revelation from Heaven, can be more likely to create this full assurance in the Soul, than these Heroick attainments of Grace and Vertue. Grace is that Seal of the Spirit, by which we are marked and sealed unto the day of Redemption: And certainly the brighter and more evident that Grace is, the more evident will it be to our own selves, and the fuller our assurance of Heaven and Eternal Happiness. Many good Christians are in a safe condition, and yet their condition is not so comfortable, by reason of those fears and doubtings, which do often accompany these lower degrees of Grace: But the more we abound in good Works, and the more eminently our Graces shine, the more comfortable will our Assurance be, and the clearer our Title to Heaven and Eternal Happiness. Read St. *Paul*'s 11 Chap. to the *Hebrews*, where he sets down a large Calendar of God's eminent Saints, such as advanc't into the highest form of Piety and Vertue, and you'l find their Faith as great as was their growth in Grace, and their assurance

rances of Heaven bearing a juſt proportion to their improvements in Holineſs. For St. *Paul* deſcribing their Faith, *ver.* 1. calls it *the ſubſtance*, or ſubſiſtence, *of things hoped for*; *the evidence*, or clear demonſtration, *of things not ſeen.*

3*ly*. Theſe ſerious endeavours after the higheſt degrees of Grace, as they will ſecure our Title to Heaven, and give us a more comfortable aſſurance of it for the preſent, ſo they will hereafter advance us to higher degrees of Glory in Heaven. We know there are different degrees of Glory in Heaven, even as *one Star differeth from another Star in Glory, ſo alſo*, ſaith St. *Paul*, *ſhall be the Reſurrection of the Juſt*: As St. *Auſtin* ſpeaks, *Splendor diſpar*, *Cælum commune*, the Saints ſhall dwell together in the ſame Heaven, but yet like Stars, they ſhall ſhine with different Rays of Glory. Now theſe higher degrees of Glory will be conferred on ſuch who arrived at higher degrees of Grace: Hence when our Saviour tells his Diſciples, John 14. 2. *In my Fathers Houſe are many Manſions*, *Tertullian* remarks thus upon the place, *Quomodo multæ Manſiones, ſi non pro varietate Meritorum? Wherefore*, ſaith he, *ſhould our Saviour mention many Manſions in his Fathers*

thers Houſe, if there were not ſeveral Rooms of different Size and Glory provided for his Saints, according to the variety of their deſerts? Indeed Heaven has room enough to lodge all the Godly; but as in other Magnificent Palaces, ſo in this of Heaven, there are higher and lower, larger and leſſer Manſions, in which God's Saints ſhall be diſpoſed of according to thoſe Services they have performed upon Earth. Their Rewards hereafter ſhall be anſwerable to their Obedience here. See then what incouragement there is to endeavour after the higheſt degrees of Glory. Theſe it ſeems, will create an Heaven in our Souls whilſt we live here on Earth. Theſe will at our Deaths, carry our Souls as high as Heaven; nay, which is more, they will lodge them in the beſt Manſions there. Hence is that of our Apoſtle, *Chap.* 1. 11. *If theſe things be in you, and abound, then ſhall an entrance be miniſtred unto you abundantly, into the everlaſting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.* Having therefore theſe Promiſes, Dearly Beloved, let us cleanſe our ſelves from all Filthineſs both of Fleſh and Spirit, perfecting Holineſs in the fear of the Lord. Let us go

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from Strength to Strength, and grow from one degree of Grace unto another, until we appear before our God in *Sion*. I ſhall conclude all with St. *Pauls* Exhortation, 1 Cor. 15. ult. *Wherefore, my beloved Brethren, be ye ſteadfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; foraſmuch as ye know, that your Labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord.* This, God of his Infinite Mercy grant unto us all, for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt, *&c.*

SERMON

SERMON IV.

Pſal. lxxvi. 10.

Surely the wrath of man ſhall praiſe thee; the remainder of wrath ſhalt thou reſtrain.

THIS Pſalm is confeſſed by all, to be a Pſalm of Thankſgiving, a Song compoſed to perpetuate the Memory of ſome wonderful and extraordinary Deliverance: But what this Deliverance was, is not ſo well agreed on by Interpreters. Some would have it to be a Pſalm of *David*, penn'd to commemorate thoſe Victories he obtain'd over the *Philiſtines*, the *Moabites* and the *Syrians*; others would have the occaſion of it to have been the diſcomfiture of that formidable Army which

which was brought up by the *Ethiopians*, in the days of *Asa*; but most understand it of that remarkable defeat which was given by the Angel to *Sennacheribs* Army, in the Reign of *Hezekiah*. Upon this account the LXX inscribe it ὠδὴ πρὸς τὴν Ἀσσύριον, the Latin *Canticum ad Assyrios*, that is, an Ode or Song made upon the *Assyrians*. And this Interpretation will receive further Light from those words of vers. 5. *The stout-hearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep, and none of the men of might have found their hands.* The *Assyrian* was now an Universal Monarch; his Soldiers were reputed the stoutest hearted in the World, having made their Valour renowned by their innumerable Conquests; but yet notwithstanding all this, when they brought a formidable Army against *Jerusalem*, their Numbers and their Strength did signifie nothing; for *the Angel of the Lord went forth, and in one Night slew* 185000 *men in the Camp of the* Assyrians, 2 *Kings* 19.35. They indeed slept their sleep; and the opinion of their own strength, and *Hezekiahs* weakness, made them secure; but in the midst of their security, God smote them in the night-

time by his Angel; so that the Mighty Men of valour slept indeed, but it was the sleep of Death, for they never awakned again, never found their Hands. Hence we read, 2 Chron. 32. 21. *That the Captains, the Leaders, and all the Mighty Men of Valour were cut off in the Camp of the King of* Assyria. Thus the God of *Israel*, who had been blasphemed by the *Assyrians*, vindicated his own Honour, by this wonderful overthrow, and his Servant *Hezekiah*, who was delivered, became Famous and Renowned amongst the Nations. Hence we read 2 Chron. 32. 23. *That many brought Gifts unto the Lord, unto* Jerusalem, *and Presents to* Hezekiah, *King of* Judah; *so that he was magnified in the sight of all Nations from thenceforth.* Thus *the wrath of Man did praise the Lord; the remainder of wrath he did restrain.*

Before I can draw from the Words, such Observations as the Solemnity of the Day will require, I must bestow some little explication on them.

First, *The wrath of Man*, the Hebrew word is *Chamath*, and properly signifies Rage. Tho' Anger, Wrath and Rage be often in Scripture used promiscuously, yet

yet ſometimes they are diſtinguiſhed; and indeed a real difference may be found between them. For Anger is the boyling of the Blood about the Heart, a Fever darted into the Veins, which cauſes a violent Commotion in the Spirits. Wrath is the manifeſtation of this inward diſtemper by Looks, or Geſture, or Actions tending to Revenge. But Rage is the height or extremity of both the former; it cauſes the Heart to ſtudy Deſtruction, to meditate and contrive the utmoſt of Miſchief and Villany, and the outward Man to watch all opportunities of putting it in Execution, and that with the greateſt depth of Malice and height of Fury. One would think this one word had been ſufficient to expreſs that Heliſh Malice which the Wicked bear againſt the Church of God. But what is *Chamath* in the beginning of the Verſe, is *Chemoth* in the cloſe: What was put in the ſingular number, is afterwards put in the plural; for ſo the words ſhould be rendred *the wrath of Man ſhall praiſe the Lord*; *the remainder of wraths or rages ſhalt thou reſtrain.* The Rage of the Wicked is not ſmall; their Fury does not terminate in one Plot, but it is exceeding great, ever

working and multiplying by continuance; ſo that there is not any Deſign ſo Barbarous, any Conſpiracy ſo Bloody or Devliſh, which their Rage will not put them upon; if one Plot fail, they are ready for another; and like the troubled Sea, they never reſt, but are ſtill caſting up Mire and Dirt: Well then might the Pſalmiſt call them Rages in the plural number; they are as *Gad, a Troop*; or if you pleaſe, you may call their Name *Legion*, they are ſo many. But,

Secondly, It is called *the wrath of Man*, in the Hebrew, *the wrath of* Adam. This Livery can fit the Shoulders of none but a very wicked Man, one that is deſcended from the Firſt *Adam*, and is not yet ingrafted into the Second. But yet it is ſome comfort, that he is but a Man, whoſe Heart is filled with all this Rage; we may be ſafe it ſeems, ſo long as the God of Heaven is on our ſide: He can reſtrain all this wrath, he can make it turn to the benefit of his People, and his own Glory. The LXX are very ingenious upon the laſt words of my Text; for what we tranſlate *the remainder of Wrath ſhalt thou reſtrain*, they render ἑορτάζει σοι *the Rage of*

of Man ſhall keep Holy-Day unto the Lord, and give his People opportunity to Laud and Magnifie his Glorious Name. By this you cannot but underſtand how well the Text and the Day, will agree. We ſhall in the Day, as well as in the Text find Anger, and Wrath, and Rage, yea Rages in the plural number. And tho' our Adverſaries call themſelves Chriſtians, and pretend to be the only Catholicks in the World; yet their Anger will be found to be fierce and Curſed, their Wrath and Rage, Cruel; ſuch as the Pſalmiſt here calls *the VVrath, the Rage of* Adam, *of one that is not yet regenerate or grafted into the New Stock.* Their Plots have been many, their Conſpiracies Black and Bloody; but thanks be to Heaven, we have found our Enemies to be but Men, tho' Cruel and Wicked to the height; we have had the experience of God's Power and Goodneſs over-ruling and reſtraining their Wrath and Fury; ſo that if our Gratitude had kept pace with our Mercies and Deliverances, we ſhould have had more days of Thankſgiving in our Calendar than now we have. But to help us a little in the performance of theſe Duties, which this Solemn Day

calls aloud for: I ſhall obſerve from the words three Things.

Firſt, That the Rage of the Wicked againſt God and his People is very great.

Secondly, God by his Providence wonderfully does over-rule the Rage and Malice of Wicked Men. And,

Thirdly, The end that God hath in theſe Providences, his is Praiſe and Glory; *ſurely the wrath of Man ſhall praiſe thee.*

Firſt, The Rage of the Wicked againſt the People of God is very great. This is the very Nature and Diſpoſition of Wicked Men, as the Pſalmiſt tells us, Pſal. 37. 12. *The Wicked plotteth againſt the Juſt, and gnaſheth upon him with his Teeth.* Nay ſo great is their Malice, that the Holy Ghoſt in Scripture, compares them *to Fire and Water, to Briars and Thorns, to Lions, Bulls, Dogs, Unicorns, Wolves*, and the like. You'l find this Truth alſo confirmed by a thouſand Examples: How did *Cain* hate his Brother *Abel*? What wrath did boil in *Eſau* againſt *Jacob*? How cruelly were the *Iſraelites* treated by the *Egyptians*? I ſhould be too prodigal of the time, ſhould I reckon up all theſe Examples of

of Holy Writ which are recorded for this purpose: I shall therefore content my self at present, with the Example of *Sennacherib*, to which the Text, as you hear, alludes. Now how did this Bloody Emperor swell with Rage, how full was his Heart of Wrath! The Prophet *Esay*, speaking of this proud *Assyrian*, Chap. 10.7. tells us, *that it was in his Heart to destroy and cut off Nations, not a few.* And what the Prophet avers of him, in the general, is confirmed more particularly of him by *Berosus*, an Antient Historian, which has left this Character of him, *Sennacherib, qui apud Assyrios regnabat, omnem Asiam & Egyptum Bello infestabat*; *Sennacherib*, saith he, *King of the* Assyrians, *infested all* Asia *and* Egypt *with War.* But tho' other Nations felt the weight of his Wrath, yet none more than the People of God. For the Scripture tells us, that he waged War three years together with the King of *Israel*, whom he took at last, and carried him, with the ten Tribes into the Land of Captivity. Eight years after this, his Rage brake forth against good *Hezekiah*; for we read 2 *Kings* 18. That he came up and seized into his Hands all the frontier Cities of *Judah*: Whilst he was

at *Laciſh*, one of the frontier Cities, *Hezekiah* ſent Ambaſſadors, and purchaſed an Ignominious Peace at a very dear rate; for *Hezekiah* was forc't to give him all the Silver that was found in the Houſe of God, and in the Treaſures of the Kings Houſe; nay, all the Gold that was upon the Doors and upon the Pillars of the Temple: And yet all this would not ſatisfie his Wrath, but he preſently ſends *Tartan*, *Rabſaris* and *Rabſhakah* with a great Hoſt againſt *Jeruſalem*, and with words of Blaſphemy againſt God himſelf: Nay, *Rabſhakah* threatens the People, that they ſhould be forced to eat their own Dung, and drink their own Piſs. If all this be not ſufficient to ſhew the Anger, the Wrath and the Rage of this proud *Aſſyrian*, I ſhall add one inſtance of it more out of the Book of *Tobit*, where we find that after the ſlaughter which the Angel made in *Sennacheribs* Army, he was forced to return home, and dwell at his great City *Niniveh*; his Fury which was ſtopt at *Jeruſalem*, brake forth againſt the poor *Jews*, the Ten Tribes which were now Captive at *Niniveh*, and therefore *Tobit* tells us, Chap. 1. 18. *That when King* Sennacherib *ſlew any*

any of the Jews, after he was fled from Judea; *I buried them privily (for,* ſaith he, *in his wrath he killed many.)* Here was the remainder of his Wrath, here was that which made it Rages in the plural number: But even this remainder of Wrath did God reſtrain; for this wicked King was ſoon after killed by his own Sons, in the Houſe of *Niſroth* his God, as I ſhall ſhew you afterwards. And as we have ſeen Anger and Wrath in the Text, ſo may we ſee much more in the Day; and find the Rages of the Papiſts, far exceeding all the Rage of theſe Barbarous *Aſſyrians.* It is the ſaying of St. *Gregory, Dilatat Behemoth Caudam ſuam in fine Mundi nequius,* which Latin I cannot Engliſh better, than in thoſe known words of the *Revelations, Wo unto the Inhabitants of the Earth, and of the Sea, for the Devil is come down with greater wrath, becauſe he knoweth that his time is ſhort.* The Malice of Hell never appeared unto the World with more Rage and Fury, than ſince it has been managed by the Church of *Rome.* Who can recount without horror, and deteſtation, the Barbarous Murders of the *Albigenſes,* the Maſſacres of *France,* the

Wars

Wars of *Germany*, and the moſt inhuman Cruelties of the *Spaniſh* Inquiſition? Here is preſented a large Field to range in, and a Field of Blood too; but the time would fail me to give a tolerable account of that Wrath and Rage which they have exerciſed from time to time againſt this poor Church of *England* ſince the Reformation. We may juſtly take up the words of the Pſalmiſt, and ſay, *Many a time have they fought againſt us, from our Youth up; yea, many a time have they afflicted us from our Youth, from the beginning of the Reformation, may our* Iſrael *ſay.* How many were thoſe Funeral Piles which were kindled by them in the reign of Queen *Mary?* How well did *Ignatius* deſerve his name, which ſignifies Fire, when ſeveral hundreds of Innocent Proteſtants were ſacrificed to the *Moloch* of their Rage, in the ſpace of leſs than four years? Nay, our late Hiſtorian of the Reformation tells us, that like Wild Beaſts, they preyed upon the very Carkaſſes, and dead Bodies of God's Saints, for they digged up the Bones of *Wickliff*, and exerciſed the utmoſt of Malice upon the Aſhes of *Bucer* and *Fagius*. If we paſs on to the reign of Queen *Elizabeth*,

beth, our Engliſh *Deborah*, we ſhall find Anger, and Wrath, and Rage enough. Indeed, for well nigh eleven years, they were pretty quiet, hoping to gain Queen *Elizabeth* by their politick flatteries: But as ſoon as theſe failed, they erected three Colledges for Engliſh Seminary Prieſts, one at *Doway*, another at *Rhemes* and another at *Rome*; and indeed theſe proved the Seminaries of all thoſe Treaſons and Rebellions which were acted afterwards. And now the Popes Bulls begin to roar, the Queen is Excommunicated, her Subjects abſolved from their Oaths; and now ſee their Wrath and Rage in the Rebellion of the unhappy Earls of *Northumberland* and *VVeſtmorland*, in the Treaſons of the *Stanlies* in *Darbyſhire*, and of 120 Prieſts and Jeſuits, ſuch as *Sanders*, *Briſtow*, *Parſons*, *Campian*, and the like: You may ſee more of this Rage in the Plots of *Somervile*, *Mayne*, *Ntlſon*, *Tompſon*, and the reſt of that Crew; and of *Payne* and his fifty Reſolutes, hired by the Pope, to murder the Queen. What need I ſpeak of *Throgmorton*, *Paget*, *Moody*, *Parry*, with ſeveral others; when the Invaſion of 88 proclaimed their Wrath and Malice to the full? For in their Ships they had

had great Knives, with this Inſcription; (as Biſhop *Andrews* reports) *Cut Engliſh Throats*; they had alſo Whips of Cord and Wire, which *Don Pedro de Valdez*, one of the Commanders, confeſſed were intended to whip us Hereticks to death; and being asked by the Council what they would have done with the young Children, he anſwered boldly, that all above ſeven years old ſhould have been murdered with their Parents, the reſt ſhould have lived, but they were to be branded in the Forehead with the Letter L. ſignifying *Lutheran*, and ſo be reſerved for perpetual Bondage. Theſe and many other Specimens have they given of their Cruelty, but this days Conſpiracy ſeems to exceed them all. For had this Helliſh Plot obtained its deſired end, the Metropolis of our Nation had become a flaming *Ætna*, our Church and State been turned into a Chaos, our Court into a *Golgotha*, and our whole Iſland into an *Aceldama*, or Field of Blood. Here is more than *Aſſyrian* Rage and Fury; now at leaſt we ſee the Rages of the Text, ſuch as we may well call the Wrath of Man, the Wrath of *Adam*, of the worſt, the wickedeſt of Men: For let Men pretend what they will, there is nothing of Religion,

ligion, nothing of Christ in such Wrath as this, for he would not suffer his Disciples to call for Fire from Heaven to destroy a little Village of the *Samaritans*; whereas these Heathen Catholicks, these Bloody Barbarous Papists, would have fetched Fire, I cannot say from Heaven, but at least from Hell, to have destroyed one of the greatest Cities in the World, *but the remainder of wrath God did restrain.* Which brings me to the second thing proposed; namely,

Secondly, That God by his good Providence does over-rule and govern the Wrath and Rage of Wicked Men, so as may be for his own Glory and his Peoples Good. As for the Wicked, they are far from proposing such ends; this proud *Assyrian* in the Text, did not in the least design the Glory of God, or the Good of his People, as the Prophet *Esay* tells us, Chap. 10.7. *He meant not so, neither did his Heart think so, but it was in his Heart to destroy, and to cut off Nations, not a few.* His Head and Heart were full of devices how to satisfie his Ambition, and raise his Empire on the ruins of other Nations; but God's Providence over-ruled his Ambi-

tious

tious Rage, and made the Wrath of this *Assyrian* to praise him.

But for the fuller opening this part of the Text, we will consider,

First, How God makes the Wrath of Man to praise him.

Secondly, Whom he makes to praise him.

First, Let us inquire how God makes the Wrath of Man to praise him. Now he doth this several ways.

1*st*. By diverting their Power and their Rage, otherwise than they first intended. The Wise Man tells us, *That the Hearts of Kings are in the Hands of God; he turneth them whithersoever he will*, Prov. 21. 1. Thus *Nazianzen* reports of *Julian* the Apostate, that when he had designed the utter ruin of the Christians, God cut him out work elsewhere, and made it necessary for him to go first against the *Persians*, by whom he was overthrown. So this *Sennacherib*, in the Text, you'l find *Esay* 10. 5. called but *the Rod of God's Anger, and the Staff of his Indignation*, to denote, that the greatest of Men are but a kind of Instruments in the Hand of God's Providence, and must expect the direction of a Superiour Cause. Hence it is very

very obſervable, that when this proud *Aſſyrian* had bent his Rage againſt *Hezekiah*, it was diverted by *Tirhakah*, the King of *Æthiopia*, waging War againſt him, as you may read 2 *Kings* 19. 9. And it is eaſie to parrallel this out of the late Hiſtory of the Reformation. For in the Reign of Queen *Mary*, *Gardiner* and other Papiſts, endeavoured to deſtroy the Lady *Elizabeth*, on whom alone, under God, the hopes of the Reformation did depend. K. *Philip* did interceed for her, and preſerved her out of intereſt of State, God putting it into his Heart, to fancy, that if ſhe were put out of the way, and he ſhould have no Iſſue from Queen *Mary*, which he very much feared; then the Queen of *Scotland*, who was to be married to the *Dauphine*, would ſucceed, and make too great an acceſſion to the *French* Crown.

2*ly*. God makes the Wrath of Man to praiſe him ſometimes, by ſuffering it to proceed ſo far, till nothing but a Divine Power, an immediate Arm of the Almighty can deliver. God does not always blaſt the deſigns of the Wicked in the Bud, or cruſh their Enterprizes in the Shell; but frequently ſuffers them to come to the Birth, and his

his choſen People to fall into great extremity; thus the tale of Bricks was doubled, before *Moſes* was ſent. Thus *Haman* was allowed to go ſo far, as even to erect the Gallows for *Mordecai*. Thus *Pharaoh* was allowed to purſue *Iſrael*, not only to the Banks, but even into the midſt of the Red Sea, that by deſtroying him there, the Right Hand of the Lord might become more Glorious in Power. And were we not delivered in ſuch a ſort this day? Were not all the Inſtruments of Death made ready? Were not the Barrels lodg'd, the Train laid, the Match burning, and the time well-nigh expired, before the Lord made bare his Arm, and pluckt his People as ſo many Brands out of the Fire?

3*ly*. God does ſometimes make the Wrath of Man to praiſe him, by infatuating the Counſels of his Churches Enemies; thus he is ſaid *to have made the Princes of* Zoan *Fools, and the wiſe Counſellors of* Pharaoh *to become brutiſh*, Iſaiah 19. 11. Thus he Countermined the politick Advice of *Achitophel*, and made that great Oracle appear according to his Name in Hebrew, which ſignifies the Brother or Couſin-german to

a

a Fool. A like inſtance of of God's Providence was that which happned in the Reign of Queen *Mary*; for when She firſt fell into that kind of Dropſie, which Phyſicians call the *Mola*, the wiſeſt of her Friends and Phyſicians were ſo far infatuated, as to conclude her to be with Child; by this means all Phyſick was forbid, till her Diſtemper grew Deſperate, and that great Obſtacle of the Reformation was happily removed.

4*ly*. God does ſometimes make the Wrath of Man to praiſe him, by making wonderful diſcoveries of their moſt ſecret Plots and cloſeſt Conſpiracies. Thus ſtrangely did he diſcover *Hamans* bloody Plot againſt the *Jews*; and that of the *Jews* againſt St. *Paul:* But ſurely the Goodneſs of God was never ſeen more eminently in the diſcovery of any Plot, than it was this day; for the ſubtilty of the Serpent did never appear more, than in the managing of this Conſpiracy. We know it was laid in the very Boſom of Hell, hammer'd in the Devils Forge, nurſt up in a dark Vault: We know alſo that the Traytors bound themſelves by the Holy Sacrament, and

the ſtricteſt Oaths of Secreſie not to diſcover it. But yet how wonderfully did God diſcover it? For did not the Lord cauſe one of the Conſpirators, notwithſtanding he had taken three ſolemn Oaths to conceal the Plot, to reveal it by Writing, verifying that of the Wiſe Man in his *Eccleſiaſtes*, *That which has Wings ſhall tell the Matter?* Nay further, was it not the over-ruling Providence of God which inclined the Heart of that Noble Lord to communicate the Letter, which otherwiſe might eaſily have been ſlighted as the off-ſpring of ſome melancholy Brain? Nay, was it not our merciful God, who at this time put a Divine Sentence into the Lips of the King, and ſuffer'd not his Mouth to tranſgreſs in Judgment? His Royal Breaſt, at other times, uſed to be free from Jealouſie, accounting it no leſs than a Badge of Tyranny: But now Providence ſo ordered it, that by an unnatural conſtruction of an Ænigmatical Phraſe, he diſcovered that unnatural deſtruction which was hatching by his Enemies.

5*ly*. God does ſometimes make the Wrath of Man to praiſe him, by inflicting

cting ſome extraordinary Judgments upon the Enemies of his People. *The Lord is known*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *by the Judgment he executeth; the Wicked is ſnared by the work of his own Hands*, Pſal. 9. 16. Thus God alſo chaſtiſed the Wrath of *Sennacherib* at the ſiege of *Jeruſalem*, by ſending his Angel to deſtroy 185000 of his Army: And tho' *Sennacherib* himſelf was ſpared, that he might the better know the Power of that God, whom he had deſpiſed and blaſphemed; yet becauſe he was not throughly reformed by this firſt Judgment, but his Wrath ſtill remained when he came to his chief City *Niniveh*, where he fell to perſecute the Ten Tribes which were captive there, God reſtrained this remainder of his Wrath by another ſignal Judgment, and made him die an ignominious Death by the Hands of his two Sons, and that in the Houſe of his own God, whom he had blaſphemouſly oppoſed to the great *Jehovah*, but was not able to protect him from the Hand of his Almighty Vengeance. And did not God alſo Glorifie himſelf thus, by thoſe ſtrange Judgments which he executed on the Powder-Traytors? Was it

not remarkable what hapned at *Holbeach* in *Worceſterſhire*, where ſome of this days Conſpirators, being drying Powder to make Reſiſtance, one ſpark of Fire lighting accidentally amongſt the Powder, wounded them ſo ſadly, that they were forced to acknowledge the Juſtice and Vengeance of God upon them by that Powder, wherewith they had intended the Deſtruction of ſo many? After this, *Catesby* and *Piercy*, two Principal Conſpirators, were accidentally ſhot to Death by one Shot of a Muſquet; and ſo fell by the Hand of God, taking revenge on them by Powder, before the Juſtice of Man was able to ſeize them. Add to this what we read in King *James*'s Works, how that God did ſecretly exaſperate the Spirits of all Men againſt theſe Popiſh Traytors, that in the Countries where they wandred, ſome of them were killed, others taken before any Proclamation could overtake them, and before the People who ſeized them, knew any thing of this particular Treaſon. Thus God this day *did make the Wrath of Man to praiſe him*, to praiſe his Juſtice, his Power in executing ſuch ſtrange Judgments

ments upon these bloody unnatural Traytors. But it is time I should shew you in the second place,

Secondly, Who they are God makes to praise him.

I shall name two sorts of Men.

1*st*. God by such means as these makes his very Enemies to praise him, by acknowledging either his Power or his Justice in their Punishments. Thus *Pharoah* and the *Egyptians* acknowledged God's Power in the Red Sea, when they cried out, *Let us flee from the Face of* Israel, *for the Lord fighteth for them against the* Egyptians. It is very remarkable what *Herodotus* reports of *Sennacherib*, the burthen of the Text; namely, that he had a Statute erected after his Death, with this good Advice engraven on it, *Whosoever looketh upon me, let him learn to be Pious, and to fear God.* So *Julian*, the Apostate, acknowledged the Power of Christ, crying out at his death, *Vicisti Galilæe, Thou art too strong for me, O thou* Galilean. What Confessions and Acknowledgments has God also extorted from our Romish Adversaries! *Don Pedro* seeing the terrible dissipation of that invincible Armado

which was sent in 88. professed, that now he perceived that God was turned *Lutheran*. And on this very day, *Faux* who was appointed to be the Black Executioner, and *Garnet* the Priest, that was to Consecrate the Plot, did confess to the praise of God, as well as the rest, at their Execution, the outragious wickedness, and odiousness of their Hellish design. But

2*ly*. God does more especially receive Honour and Praise from his own People, whom he wonderfully delivers from the Rage of Wicked Bloody Men: Thus *Israel*, when they saw the *Egyptians* dead upon the shore, they sang praise unto God, proclaiming him fearful in praises and doing wonders: Thus *Hezekiah* sent this Psalm to the chief Musician on *Neginoth*, that solemn Praises and Thanksgivings might be returned unto God, for their wonderful deliverance from the Rage of *Sennacherib*. Even so Religious King *James* did erect this day for a Pillar of Gratitude to our good God, who did so miraculously preserve our King, the Royal Family, the Parliament, with our Laws, Liberties and Religion: Let us therefore rejoyce in the Lord,

and

and again I ſay rejoyce; let us rouze up our Spirits, call up our Hearts, and let all that is within us bleſs his Holy Name. Sure if God extort praiſes from his very Enemies, he may more juſtly inhabit the praiſes of his own People, thoſe that he has ſo wonderfully preſerved: Nay, conſider how he has *reſtrained alſo the remainder of Wrath*; How many Plots of theſe Blood thirſty Papiſts he has ſince defeated. If it had not been the Lord, who was on our ſide, when Men roſe up againſt us, they had ſwallowed us up quick, when their Wrath was kindled ſo hot againſt us: Let us therefore bleſs the Lord our God, who has not given us over as a prey unto their Teeth. And to help us a little in the performance of this Duty, I ſhall conclude all with theſe two following Directions.

Firſt, If you praiſe God aright for the Mercies of this Day, you muſt be zealous for that Church, which God has hitherto ſo wonderfully preſerved. You have heard how that becauſe God had ſo wonderfully preſerved *Hezekiah* from the Fury of *Sennacherib*, *they brought Preſents unto him, and he was mag-*

nified in the ſight of all Nations from thenceforth. How ought we then to magnifie that Church which God has magnified! How precious, how honourable ought it to be in all our Eyes, which God has honoured with ſo many Miracles! We know this Church is the greateſt Eye-ſore of *Rome*; and to uſe the words of the Author *of the Review of the Council of* Trent, 'There has not 'been more woful Tragedies of the Pa-'pal Fury acted upon any Stage, than 'this of *England:* Yet how has God all along *reſtrained their Wrath?* Well then may we own that Church, and be zealous for her, whom God has ſo ſignally owned, and been at the expence of ſo many Miracles to preſerve. But

Secondly, The Life of Thankfulneſs does chiefly conſiſt in the Lives of thoſe that are Thankful. He that ordereth his Converſation aright, is ſaid to glorifie God, in this Book of Pſalms. If after ſuch wonderful deliverances, as you have heard this day, we ſtill indulge our ſelves in ſin, our moſt coſtly Sacrifices will prove an abomination; the Lord will even ſpread the very Dung of them on our Faces: See therefore with what

what paſſion *Ezra* exhorts the *Jews* to this Duty after their Deliverance from the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, Ezra 9. 13. *When we have received ſuch deliverance as this, ſhould we again break thy Commandments, wouldſt thou not be angry with us, till thou hadſt conſumed us?* We muſt therefore keep holineſs in our Lives, otherwiſe we ſhall not be fit to keep an Holy-Day to the Lord. It becometh well the juſt to be thankful; let the high praiſes of God be in their Mouths, and it will pleaſe him better than a Bullock that has Horns and Hoofs. Let us therefore reform our Lives, and being thus wonderfully delivered from the Hands of our Enemies, let us ſerve without fear, in holineſs and righteouſneſs before him all the days of our Life; which God of his Infinite Mercy grant, *&c.*

SER-

SERMON V.

1 Cor. xi. 19.

For there must be also Heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

CORINTH being seated on the *Peloponnesian Isthmus*, had the advantage both of the *Ionian* and *Ægean* Sea, to bring into its Bosom all the Treasures of the World: And indeed these Temporal Blessings flowed there in such great abundance, that *Corinth* is styled by *Homer* ἀφνειὸς, and by *Pindar* ὀλβία, that is, in plain English, the Rich and Happy City of *Corinth*. And as *Corinth* was thus happy in respect of its Trade and

and Commerce, ſo it was much more happy in having the Goſpel planted there by the great Apoſtle S. *Paul*. It was accounted the honour of theſe Primitive Churches to have ſome Apoſtle or other to be their Founder; and the more eminent the Apoſtle was, the greater was the honour of the Church he planted. Now in this reſpect *Corinth* was inferiour unto none, as being founded by St. *Paul*, the great Apoſtle of the *Gentiles*; one who is ſometimes ſtyled by the Antients, Prince of the Apoſtles; and who in that modeſt Character which he has left of himſelf in 2 *Cor.* 11. 5. tells us expreſly, *That he was not a-whit behind the very chiefeſt Apoſtles* The honour therefore of the Church of *Corinth* could not but be great, ſince it was planted by this great Apoſtle St. *Paul*: And the honour of it will appear yet greater, if we add the obſervation of a Learned Author, *Super hac Eccleſia maxime triumphat Paulas*, St. *Paul*, ſaith he, *tho' he converted ſeveral other Nations, and planted ſeveral other Churches, yet he ſeems to glory moſt, yea even triumph in the Converſion of the* Corinthians: Theſe he calls *his ſpecial work*

work in the Lord, and the very Seal of his Apoſtleſhip, Chap. 9. of this Epiſtle, ver. 1, 2. And as the Church of *Corinth* had the honour to be planted by the Labours of St. *Paul*, ſo it had alſo the happineſs to be watered by the Eloquence of *Apollo*, and the powerful Preachings of St. *Peter*. Now one would have thought a Church thus happily Planted and Watred, might, if any in the World, have promis'd it ſelf an immunity from Schiſms and Diviſions, at leaſt, ſo long as theſe Infallible Apoſtles and Unerring Guides were ſtill alive: But alas even Infallibility it ſelf is ſo far from proving an Antidote againſt Schiſms, that it was a great means of raiſing and promoting them here at *Corinth*; for in the firſt Chapter of this Epiſtle we find them crying out, *I am of* Paul, *I am of* Apollo, *and I am of* Cephas: And beſides theſe Schiſms, which took their riſe from the eminency of their Teachers; we find in this 11*th* Chapter, ſeveral other Diviſions about the Sacrament. Unity is indeed a ſignal Bleſſing, yet ſuch as the beſt of Churches may not always enjoy. *Corinth*, as Glorious and Eminent a Church as

as it was, was rent in pieces by Factions and Diviſions; nay, which is ſtranger yet, St. *Paul* in the Text, ſtamps an *Oportet* upon them; *there muſt*, ſaith he, *be Hereſies*, or as he calls them in the foregoing Verſe, *Diviſions among you*, Satan and his Inſtruments will always watch their opportunity to ſow theſe Tares: And God it ſeems is willing to permit them, that the rottenneſs of ſome, and the integrity of others may be diſcovered. So much St. *Paul* tells us in the Text, *for there muſt be alſo Hereſies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifeſt among you.* From which words I ſhall endeavour to ſhew you.

Firſt, That the beſt of Churches are ſubject to the Misfortune of Schiſms and Diviſions.

Secondly, VVhat thoſe Cauſes are which make Schiſms and Diviſions in ſome ſort neceſſary.

Thirdly, That God's deſign in ſuffering theſe Schiſms and Diviſions is to diſcover the Rottenneſs of ſome, and Integrity of others.

Fourthly, That thoſe are truly Noble and Honourable Perſons, who continue ſteadfaſt

ſtedfaſt in the Communion of God's Church amidſt theſe Schiſms and Diviſions which ariſe in it: Theſe are the οἱ δόκιμοι, the approved ones in the Text. *There muſt*, ſaith St. *Paul*, *be Hereſies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifeſt*. I begin with the firſt of theſe.

Firſt, Namely, to ſhew you, that the beſt of Churches are ſubject to the misfortune of Schiſms and Diviſions. He muſt be a very great Stranger both to Scripture and Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, who does not know, that the misfortune of *Corinth*, in the Text, is the uſual fate and misfortune of other Churches. There is not any Church mentioned in the *New Teſtament*, but what was ſadly diſtracted with Schiſms and Diviſions. We find at *Galata*, ſuch as preacht up *Judaiſm*, and bewitched the *Galatians* with a Dangerous Opinion of the neceſſity of Legal Rites. St. *Paul* warns the *Coloſſians* of ſuch as were ready to ſpoil them through vain Philoſophy, and bids them take care, that no man beguiled them in a voluntary humility, and worſhipping of Angels. When he wrote his Hierarchial Epiſtle to *Titus*, the

the first Bishop of *Crete*. It seems Hereticks were so numerous in that Church, that he was obliged to give him this Apostolical Canon among the rest, *An Heretick after the first and second Admonition, reject.* If we take a view of the Seven Churches of *Asia*, recorded in the Book of *Revelations*, St. *John* will shew us a Synagogue of Satan in the Church of *Smyrna*; *Nicolaitans and Balaamites* in the Church of *Sardis*; Hereticks stigmatized with the name of *Jezabel*, in the Church of *Thyatira*; and in *Ephesus*, the Mother Church, Counterfeit Apostles, who said they were Apostles, and were not, but upon trial were found Liars. Tho' the Faith of the *Romans* was at this time so famous, that it was spoken of, saith S. *Paul*, throughout the whole World, yet they were not so happy as to be free from Divisions; for our Apostle gives them this Advise, Rom. 16. 17. *I beseech you, Brethren, mark them which cause Divisions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine which you have received, and avoid them.* Thus we have found Schisms and Divisions in all those Churches which are recorded in the *New Testament*; and if we descended

deſcend to ſucceeding Ages, we ſhall find Schiſms and Diviſions too many. Whoſoever have learning and leiſure enough to conſult *Epiphanius* and S. *Auſtin*, will find them reckoning up no fewer than an 100 Hereſies, even in thoſe beſt and pureſt Ages of Chriſtianity. All this, I hope, will ſuffice to prevent any ſiniſter opinion of the Church of *England*, which at this time is torn in pieces by Schiſms and Diviſions: This indeed ought to be matter of Lamentation to us, and ingage our moſt ardent prayers for the peace of *Jeruſalem*. But ſure it cannot be managed as an Argument againſt our Church, but the blow will reach other Churches too, even all thoſe Churches which are now in Chriſtendom, and as you have heard, thoſe beſt of Churches which were in the firſt and pureſt Ages of Chriſtianity. Let not therefore your preſent Diviſions leſſen your eſteem of the Church of *England*. The beſt of Churches are ſubject to theſe misfortunes, and will be ſo to the end of the World. For as our Saviour ſpeaks, Luke 17. 1. *It is impoſſible but that Offences will come*; And St. *Paul* ſays the ſame in the Text, where he

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tells us, *that there must be Hereſies*, which brings me to the ſecond General propoſed.

Secondly, Namely, to enquire what thoſe Cauſes are, which make Schiſms and Diviſions, in ſome ſort, neceſſary; and here I cannot but aſſign,

1ſt. The firſt and principal place to the infernal *Fiends*. Satan is the Enemy in our Saviours Parable, who is ſaid to ſow theſe Tares in the Field of the Church. Hence St. *Paul* calls Hereſies the Doctrins of Devils. *Ignatius* ſtyles them the Plants and Snares of Satan; and to name no more, *Epiphanius* calls the Arch-heretick *Arius* εἰκὼν καὶ ἀρδριὰς τῦ Διαβόλυ, that is, the Image and Statue of the Devil. However the Devil labours to keep his own Kingdom in peace and tranquility, yet he ſeeks nothing more than to cauſe Diviſions in the Kingdom of Chriſt. The *Egyptians*, who worſhipped of old, Dogs and Cats, and ſhed penitent Tears before the Shrine of a Deified Onion: The *Pagans*, who worſhip the Sun, Moon and all the Hoſt of Heaven; and the *Mahometans*, who worſhip a curſed Impoſtor, theſe never had ſuch diviſions among

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them, as have been, and ſtill are in the Church of Chriſt. Unity is the ſtrength and ſtability of all Communities: So that Satan would fight againſt his own Intereſt, ſhould he diſturb the quiet of thoſe Societies which are devoted to his Service. But the Church of Chriſt, the purer it is either in Doctrin or in Worſhip, the more does it threaten ruin and deſtruction to Satans Kingdom; no wonder then if this ſubtil Serpent does uſe all his ſtratagems and devices to ſtir up differences and contentions in theſe Chriſtian Societies. Well then might St. *Cyprian* conclude, that the Schiſms and Hereſies which happened in his time, were induſtriouſly raiſed by the Devil, that he might revenge himſelf on the Chriſtian Religion, which had ſtruck his Oracles dumb, and almoſt baniſht his Worſhip out of the World. Thus Satan, you ſee, is the Principal Cauſe of thoſe Diviſions which diſturb the Peace of God's Church; and this, by the way, affords us another Apology for the Church of *England*. We muſt confeſs our Diviſions are great and ſad; but this only argues Satans greater Rage and Malice againſt her.

And

And, I pray, what wonder is it, that the Father of Lies ſhould be a malitious Enemy againſt that Church which is the Ground and Pillar of Truth. But,

2*ly.* Tho' Satan be the Principal Cauſe of Schiſms and Diviſions, yet he employs the Luſts and Paſſions of Men as Inſtruments to raiſe them. Hence is that of St. *James*, Chap. 4. 1. *Whence are Wars and Fightings among you? Are they not hence, even from your Luſts?* Man before his Converſion is no better than a Centaur, half Bruit and half Man: And till Grace has aſcended the Throne, he exceeds for Rage and Fury the wildeſt Inhabitants of the Foreſt. *Lactantius* compares his Exorbitant Paſſions to mad furious Horſes, which hurry him violently on ſuch things as are miſchievous and pernicious to Society. Now Satan works upon theſe Paſſions of Men, and raiſes them as Wind does the Seas, into tumult and commotion; no wonder then if St. *Paul*, *Chap.* 5. 20. reckons among the Luſts of the Fleſh, *Hatred, Variance, Emulation, Strife, Seditions, Hereſies and Envyings:* But tho' there be not any Luſt which does not contribute more or leſs to thoſe contentions

which happen in the Church; yet Pride, Covetousness, Curiosity and self-love are observed to be the chief *Beautifeau's* and Incendiaries of them.

1. Pride is one great Cause of those Divisions and Contentions which happen in the Church. It is a true saying of *Solomon*, Prov. 13. 10. *Only by Pride cometh Contention. Melanchton* in his Comment upon the place mentions a famous Proverb to this purpose, *Duo Montes non miscentur*, two swelling Mountains will not mix well together. When Men begin to swell with Pride and Ambition, they soon grow too big for the little Fold of Christ. Thus *Diotrephes*, loving the preheminence, disturbed the Peace of the *Asiatick* Churches. Thus *Arius*, priding himself in his skill in Logick, sought to raise his reputation by opposing his Diocesan. Ambition is a very turbulent and seditious Passion; and if Men once give the Reins to it, it will make them fire the Temple of God, as *Herostratus* did *Diana's*, only to get a name, and to be talkt of in the World.

2. Covetousness is another great and special Cause of those Divisions which

which happen in the Church. Since St. *Paul* tells us, *that the love of mony is the root of all evil*, we may well conclude it one cauſe of the evil of Schiſm; and indeed St. *Peter* tells us ſo expreſly, 2 *Pet.* 2. 3. where the Character he gives of Hereticks is this, *Through Covetouſneſs they make merchandiſe of people with feigned words.* *Mammon* is own'd for a God by the greateſt part of Mankind; and with moſt men in the world Gain paſſes for Godlineſs. We need not wonder then if the deſire of Wealth prove often both the Mother and the Nurſe of Hereſies. As ſoon as *Demetrius* had told the Silver-Smiths of *Epheſus*, that their Craft was in danger to be ſet at naught, they preſently fill the City with noiſe and uproar; and cry out ſtoutly, *Great is* Diana *of the* Epheſians. St. *Jude* deſcribing the manners of the *Gnoſtick* Hereticks, tells us, *they ran greedily after the error of* Balaam *for reward.* St. *Cyprian* writes of the Heretick *Novatus*, that he was *Avaritiæ inexplebili rapacitate furibundus*, moſt inſatiably covetous and rapacious, even to a degree of madneſs. But to name no more, the *Magdeburgenſes* long ago ob-

ſerved, *that Covetouſneſs helpt to Spawn moſt of the Hereſies in the World.*

3. Curioſity is another unhappy Cauſe of Schiſms and Diviſions. Chriſt has given us a Rule to walk by; and the Holy Scriptures contain all things neceſſary to be believed in order to Salvation: And ſo long as men hold faſt that form of ſound words which was at firſt delivered to the Church, there can be no danger of Schiſms and Diviſions: But curioſity makes men deſire to be wiſe above what is written, and conſequently diſturb the Peace and Tranquility of the Church. This St. *Paul* foreſaw, when he commanded *Timothy* to charge ſome, *That they give no heed to Fables, and endleſs Genealogies, which miniſter Queſtions, rather than Godly Edifying*, 1 Tim. 1. 4. and Chap. 6. 3, 4. he condemns ſuch as dote about Queſtions and Diſpute about Words, whereof cometh *Envy, Strife, Railings and Surmiſes.*

4. Self-love is another unhappy Cauſe of Schiſms and Diviſions. This is the ſtrongeſt and moſt violent Paſſion of the Soul, and therefore St. *Paul* gives it the precedence of all the reſt, 2 *Tim.* 3. 2.

It

It is a true saying of *Luthers*, *Societies would continue longer than they do, if it were not for this little Pronoun* Ego, *I my self*. For whilst Men prefer their own Interest before the Publick; whilst they seek their own things, rather than the things of Jesus Christ and his Church; they tear his seamless Coat in pieces, and make unhappy Divisions among Christians. To prevent therefore these Divisions, St. *Paul* gives this Advice amongst others, *Let nothing be done through strife: Look not every man on his own things, but also on the things of others*, Phil. 2. 3, 4. Thus I have shewn you what are the Causes of Schisms and Divisions in the Church, and so long as these Causes remain, we must expect the fatal consequences of them; so long as the Devil is allowed to go about *as a Roaring Lion seeking whom he may devour*; so long as he has mens Lusts and Passions to join with him in the Work; so long as he can imploy such Instruments as the Ambitious, Covetous, Curious and Lovers of themselves, he will be able to disturb the Peace of God's Church. Indeed God has power sufficient to prevent these Divisions; he

can create a firm and lasting peace among Christians. But as St. *Cyprian* speaks, *Fieri hæc Dominus permittit & patitur, manente propriæ libertatis arbitrio, The Lord*, saith he, *suffers these Divisions to be in his Church, because he leaves men to act according to the liberty of their Wills.* God does not imploy his irresistible power in keeping men from Schism, more than from other sins. But having forbidden it with all the solemnity imaginable, having discypher-ed the damnable nature of it, and prest Christians by innumerable, and those most powerful Motives to keep this Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace, he leaves them to act for them-selves in this, as in other matters, ap-pointing a day in which he will judge and punish everlastingly such as dare to disturb the Peace of his Church. We need not wonder then if men be Tray-tors to the Church as well as to the State; if they rebel against Christ as well as against their Prince; seeing God leaves men at liberty to commit this as well as any other sin. Now if any should put the Question, why God leaves men thus to their liberty? Tho'

I might chaſtiſe ſuch curioſity with *Solomons* Anſwer, *Eccleſ.* 7. 10. who tells ſuch Curious Perſons, *That they do not enquire wiſely concerning this matter*; yet ſince St. *Paul* has furniſht me with a more ſatisfactory reply in the Text, I ſhall return them this Anſwer in my third General, Namely,

Thirdly, That God's deſign in ſuffering theſe Schiſms and Diviſions, is to diſcover the rottenneſs of ſome, and the integrity of others. This may eaſily be gathered from the Text, where St. *Paul* tells us, *That there muſt be Hereſies, that they who are approved may be made manifeſt.* It is a Golden Sentence of St. *Auſtin*, *That God who is Infinitely Good, would never ſuffer Evil, but that being alſo Omnipotent, he is able to extract Good out of Evil.* When God ſuffers Schiſms and Diviſions to befall his Church, his deſign is to diſcover to the World, the Rottenneſs of ſome and the Integrity of others. It may be ſaid of Religion, what good old *Simeon* ſaid of Chriſt, the Author of it, *It is ſet for the fall and riſing of many in* Iſrael. So long as Religion proſpers and flouriſhes in the World, Hypocrites and the worſt

worſt of Atheiſts will be content to own it. But if at any time it falls into Diſtreſs, or labours under Perſecution, then they fall off like Leaves in *Autumn.* Indeed, as St. *Cyprian* obſerves, *Nemo exiſtimet bonos Eccleſia poſſe diſcedere, None can imagin,* ſaith he, *that Good Men will abjure the Communion of God's Church*; as he goes on, *the Wind drives not away the ſolid Wheat, but the Chaff; the Storm may overturn the weaker Shrubs, but the ſturdy Oak gains ſtrength and firmneſs by the Tempeſt.* To the ſame purpoſe is that of St. *John,* 1 *John* 2. 19. *They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would, no doubt, have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifeſt, that they were not of us.* Times of Diviſion are times of Trial; and do, as the Father ſpeaks, in ſome ſort *anticipate the day of Judgment*; *for at ſuch times the Tares will gather themſelves into Bundles, and leave the purer Corn without any mixture in the Field of the Lord*: Sound Believers will now be known from Hypocrites; and though the Church may not be crouded with ſuch numbers as it was

was before, yet its greateſt loſs will be only of rotten Members: It will now be able to diſcern its Friends from its Foes: And tho' an *Acacius*, an *Eceboliuſ*, and ſuch like Changlings, may ſerve the Times and themſelves more; yet all ſincere Chriſtians will think it both their Duty and Honour to adhere couragiouſly to the Church of God, which brings me to the fourth General propoſed. Namely.

Fourthly, To ſhew you, that thoſe are truly Noble and Honourable Perſons who continue ſteadfaſt in the Communion of God's Church amidſt theſe Schiſms and Diviſions which ariſe in it. Theſe are the οἱ δόκιμοι, the approved ones in the Text. The Greek word which is here rendred Approved, is a Metaphor taken from Gold tried in the Fire. We know ſuch a trial makes its ſolidity and luſtre ſhine the brighter; yea, it is now valued at an higher rate than it was before. Even ſo Chriſtians, when they continue ſteadfaſt amidſt Schiſms and Diviſions, it renders them much more honourable than they were before: There is an advantage, ſaith *Plutarch*, which men receive from their

their very Enemies; had there been no *Trojan* Wars, *Hector*'s Valour had never been so renowned; and the greater the violence of a Tempest is, the more highly does it commend the skill of the Pilot: Even so the integrity of Orthodox Christians shines the brighter, when others are unsettled by the turn of the Times, or by the crafty subtilties of Schismaticks and Hereticks. And the honourableness of such stedfastness will appear more at large, by these few Particulars.

1. This Steadfastness is an Argument, that men have formerly taken just pains to inform themselves about matters of Religion: As Ignorance is a Stain to Human Nature, so Knowledge, on the contrary, must be the Honour and Glory of it. This is one of the greatest perfections of the Soul, without which, as *Solomon* tells us, the Mind cannot be good, and as Knowledge, in the General, is thus honourable, so no Knowledge is so Honourable as the Knowledge of Religion. Religion is the chiefest concern of Mankind, and consequently ignorance of this is the most shameful brand; and yet such ignorance

norance as this, for the moſt part, are they guilty of, who prove unfaithful to the Church of God. Hence St. *Paul*, 2 *Tim.* 3. 6, 7. ſpeaking of ſome who ſuffered themſelves to be perverted by Seducers, he calls the *ſilly Women, ſuch as are ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth:* Nay, elſewhere he ſtyles them *Children in underſtanding, who are toſſed to and fro with every wind of Doctrin.* For a man therefore to be ſteadfaſt in the Truth, muſt needs be Honourable, becauſe it argues him to be a Knowing Man, and that in matters of the higheſt importance.

2. Stedfaſtneſs in Religion muſt needs be honourable, becauſe it is an Argument of the greateſt Wiſdom. To be accounted wiſe is a piece of Honour men have always been covetous and ambitious of; and there are none think they have a better title to it, than ſuch as change their Religion to ſerve their Temporal Intereſts. Indeed our Saviour tells us, *That the Children of this World, are in their Generation, wiſer than the Children of Light.* It muſt be acknowledged they are wiſer

wiſer as to worldly Affairs; and by renouncing their Religion, they may make better proviſions for the remainder of their Life here. But alas! *What is a man profited, if he gain the whole World, and loſe his own Soul; or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his Soul? Eſau*, in the judgment of St. *Paul*, was a very prophane Perſon, when he ſold his Birth-right for a Meſs of Pottage; and *Judas* made but a ſorry Bargain, when for thirty pieces of Silver he betrayed his Saviour and his Soul together; ſuch worldly Policy is not the beſt ſort of Wiſdom: He is truly the wiſeſt man, who prefers his Soul before his Body, Heaven before Earth, and Eternity before a Moment. Now none is ſuch a Wiſe Man as this, but he who adheres ſtedfaſtly to the Church of God, and values his Religion above Eſtate, Life, and all the fading Enjoyments of this tranſitory World.

3. Stedfaſtneſs in Religion muſt needs be Honourable, becauſe ſuch ſhall be honoured by Chriſt in an eſpecial manner, at the day of Judgment. God has promiſed, that thoſe that honour him,

him, he will honour. Now we have no better way to honour God, than by owning his Truth, and adhering to his Church. Religion is the great concern God has in the World, for the Honour and Advancement of which, all those Miracles were wrought which are recorded in the Bible: It is not therefore possible to please God more, than by being true and faithful to Religion. Hear what Honour our Saviour promises to put upon such at the day of Judgment, *Whosoever shall confess me before men*, saith Christ, *him shall the Son of Man confess before the Angels of God*, Luke 12. 8. However, sincere Christians may be reviled and evil intreated by a wicked World; it seems they will be own'd and honour'd by their Dearest Saviour: and if there be one Crown of Glory larger than another, he will bestow it on such as are faithful to the death. I might, if the time and your patience would permit, add several other Arguments to shew the Honourableness of those Persons who continue stedfast in the Communion of God's Church; but these I am confident will suffice at present.

I ſhall therefore conclude with a word of Exhortation, beſeeching you to continue ſtedfaſt in the Communion of the Church of *England*. It will not be prudence in me to make any Reflections on other Churches; but this, I hope, may be ſaid without offence, that I know not any Church this day upon Earth, with which we may more ſafely Communicate, than with the Church of *England*. The Church of *Rome* is deſervedly reckoned one of the Ancienteſt Churches in Chriſtendom; and yet, if we may believe *Baronius*, one of the beſt of their Hiſtorians, the Church of *England* is Senior to it more than five years. The Government of this Church is known to be Epiſcopal: That Government which was inſtituted by Chriſt, and was the only Government in the Church for fifteen hundred years after the Times of the Apoſtles. And as this Church is governed by Biſhops, ſo we have had a continued Succeſſion of them, from the very beginning, to this preſent day, as may be learned from *Godwins* Catalogue of Biſhops, and *Parkers Antiquitates*

tes Britannicæ. The Faith which our Church profeſſes, may be found in her Creeds, which are the Apoſtles, the *Nicene*, and the *Athanaſian* Creeds; the only Creeds which were owned by the Primitive Church: ſo that if we may be ſaved by that Faith which was thought ſufficient by the Apoſtles and the beſt of Chriſtians, we need not ſeek a new one from any Church in Chriſtendom. No Church can pretend to more Loyal Principles, or recommend it Self more to the Favour of Princes by the conſtant Fidelity of its Members, than the Church of *England.* This alſo is that Church which enjoyed *Lucius*, the Firſt Chriſtian King, and had the honour to have born in it, the Firſt Chriſtian Emperor and Empreſs, namely, *Conſtantine* the Great, and the moſt Religious *Helena.* Theſe are great and ſignal Honours, ſuch as no other Church is able to boaſt of; and I ſhall add one greater than them all, namely, that the Religion of our Church was ſealed by the Blood of King *Charles* I. the firſt Royal Martyr that ever was in the World. This certainly is a Church none of us

have the leaſt reaſon to be aſhamed of, and as little reaſon to be afraid to own; ſince we are ſo well aſſured of their preſent Majeſties Gracious Protection. I ſhall therefore conclude this Diſcourſe as St. *Paul* does the 15*th* Chapter of the Firſt Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, *Wherefore, my Beloved Brethren, be ye ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord; foraſmuch as you know that your Labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord.*

To God the Father, *&c.*

SER-

SERMON VI.

Luke xxiii. 39,----43.

And one of the Malefactors, which were hanged, railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thy self and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds, but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdom. And Jesus said unto

him, Verily I ſay unto thee, to day thou ſhalt be with me in Paradiſe.

AS Repentance is owned by all ſorts of Chriſtians to be a Duty of abſolute neceſſity, and conſequently moſt ſeaſonable to be performed at all times; ſo they do not deſerve the Name of Chriſtians, who refuſe to ſet about a Duty of ſuch great importance, in this time of Lent. I have already preſſed this Duty on you by ſeveral Arguments. One you may remember was taken from that Obedience which we owe to our Lawful Superiours. He has not the leaſt ſpark of Loyalty in him, who does not acknowledge our Obedience is due to thoſe Commands of our Superiours which concern indifferent things: And ſure then he muſt not pretend the leaſt tittle to Loyalty, who lives in actual diſobedience to the known Commands of his Superiors, when they require things of the greateſt importance and moſt abſolute neceſſity. Now we all know, that

that our Superiours call upon us to Repent in this ſeaſon of *Lent*; and, I hope, we will all acknowledge, that Repentance is a Duty of greateſt importance, and moſt abſolute neceſſity. Where then is that Loyalty we uſe to boaſt of? Will he, think you, obey his Superiors in ſmaller matters, who denies obedience in matters of greateſt concernment, and of Eternal importance to his own Soul? But becauſe I know it is eaſie for ſome to boaſt of their Loyalty, when, in truth, they either know not what it means, or at leaſt are unwilling to give the trueſt demonſtrations of it: I have urged other Arguments drawn from the conſideration of that Glorious Prize God propoſes unto ſincere Penitents, and thoſe Dreadful Puniſhments which are threatned the Impenitent. Hope and Fear are the great Hinges on which Human Nature is made to move: And one would think Arguments, which alarm two ſuch powerful Paſſions of the Soul, ſhould not want ſucceſs, but prevail with ſinners of what ſize ſoever, to ingage themſelves in this important Duty: And yet experience ſadly informs us, that neither Heaven nor Hell, nei-

ther the Hopes of the one, nor the Fears of the other can perſwade the generality of Men to repent of their ſins. Sure then there is ſome conſiderable Stumbling block in the way; ſomething more than ordinary that makes men ſo careleſs and negligent in the performance of this Duty. And indeed there is a very great Stumbling-block in the way. For tho' all Chriſtians acknowledge Repentance to be a work of abſolute neceſſity; yet they believe it may be done ſufficiently when they are a dying. They think they may ſafely dedicate the fair Bloſſoms of their Youth to Sin and Satan, provided they are careful to bequeath their Souls to God in their laſt Will and Teſtament; and they are highly incouraged to this vain and moſt dangerous belief, by the Example of the penitent Thief in the Goſpel. For this Reaſon I have choſen this portion of Scripture at this time; all the Parts of which I do not intend to examine at this time, but only ſhew you from them theſe two things:

Firſt, That there is no encouragement at all for a late Death-bed Repentance, in the Example of the penitent Thief. And, Secondly,

Secondly, From the Example of the Impenitent Thief ſhew you, that a late Repentance is a thing moſt dangerous, if not in ſome ſort impoſſible.

Firſt, Let us Enquire, what little encouragement there is for a late Death-Bed Repentance, in the Example of this penitent Thief. Indeed this famous Story of the penitent Thief, ſeems at firſt view to give great encouragement to a late Death-bed Repentance. It is, I confeſs, a Relation of a Dying-man, one laden with many and great ſins: Sins of ſuch an heinous Nature, as deſerved, by his own Confeſſion, the greateſt of Puniſhments, to wit, that of the Croſs. As he had ſpent his whole Life in Robbing and Stealing, ſins which ſeldom want the company of other Enormities; ſo when he was upon the Croſs, he joyned alſo at the firſt with the other Thief in reviling our Saviour; hence the other Evangeliſts tells us, in the Plural Number, that *the Thieves reviled him.* So great, ſo notorious a ſinner was this poor Thief, and yet upon his turning to God at the laſt gaſp; upon his humble Confeſſion of his Faults, and expreſſing his ſorrow for them, his Pardon is ſealed, the Arms of Mercy

open themſelves wide to embrace him, and Chriſt gives him a Promiſe, that *his Soul ſhould be with him that very day in Paradiſe.* And ſince theſe things are ſo, who dares now bode ill to the Clinicks of our Age, thoſe I mean, who add *drunkenneſs to thirſt, and thirſt to drunkenneſs*, who labour daily to ſwear God Almighty out of Heaven; who, with *Solomon*'s Young-man, *rejoyce all the days of their Youth, walk in all the ways of their own Hearts, and in the ſight of their own Eyes:* Why ſhould we, ſay they, diſturb our Mirth and Jollity, with the melancholy Thoughts of *Religion*? It is time enough to think of Heaven, when we ſhall be allowed to ſtay no longer upon Earth! A few ſalt Tears at the Hour of Death, a little Confeſſion to a Prieſt, attended with ſighs and groans, will be a ſufficient atonement for our former Miſcarriages: God's Mercy, which was ſufficient for this penitent Thief, will alſo ſerve our turns at the laſt; and therefore Miniſters ſhall never make us out of love with our darling Luſts; we are not ſuch Fools, as to be cheated ſo eaſily of all our Pleaſures: Let them, if they can,

impoſe

impoſe upon Vulgar Hearers, we are too Learned ever to be perſwaded to begin ſo ſoon to think of Heaven and Eternity. But how ſadly, how fatally are ſuch Preſumptous ſinners miſtaken! Tho' the Text be a Relation of a Dying man returning from great ſins to God; yet it is attended with extraordinary Circumſtances, ſuch as will make even the boldeſt Sinner to tremble, and, I hope, be ſo wiſe, as to make more early Proviſions for his Immortal Soul: For in ſome things this Example is vaſtly different from their Condition, and in many others it is above their imitation; ſo that if they will but ſeriouſly conſider all Circumſtances, they will find them ſo remarkable, and ſo extraordinary, that this Example can be no ſafe Rule for them to walk by. For,

1ſt, Let us conſider, that in all probability this was the firſt Call that was given this Thief to repent; it was the firſt opportunity that was offer'd him to be acquainted with Chriſt. The Scripture ſays nothing at all to the contrary, and Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory may confirm us in this belief. Hear what account St. *Auſtin* gives of this penitent Thief:

Thief: *Ad consequendam fidem, non fuit illi extrema hora, sed prima: Nec Religionem ante, nec Christum scivit: Non remedia status sui in momenta ultima infelici fraude posuit.* *If* (saith this Father) *we respect his Opportunities for attaining Faith, his Repentance was not late, but early; he took the very first season: As soon as ever he descried Christ and Religion, he readily embraced them: He did not wretchedly cheat himself of the Remedies of his miserable condition, he did not adjourn the use of them to a late uncertain Futurity, which seldom or never succeeds well.* Let now the bold Presumptuous sinners of our Times, compare themselves, if they please, with the Example of the Text: Let them see, if they can extract any Comfort or Encouragement from hence. Will they say indeed, that they never had any Call to Repentance? Will they pretend, that there was never offer'd them any Opportunity to be acquainted with Christ? Alas! how oft has Christ been Crucified before their Eyes, in the Ministry of the Word? How oft have they seen him in the Sacrament bleeding for their sins? Have they

they not had *Line upon Line, and Precept upon Precept?* Have they not had private and publick Admonitions? How many National Judgments and Calamities have call'd aloud for their Humiliation? How many publick Mercies and Deliverances have invited them to the Duty? Sure, then, they cannot draw a parallel between their own Caſe and the Caſe of the Thief: They cannot at the Hour of Death expect any Comfort or Conſolation from his Example.

2dly, Conſider how remarkable, how wonderful, how extraordinary the Repentance of this Thief was. As Jewels contain vaſt Riches in a little room, ſo his ſhort Life of Penitency had a whole Age of Repentance in it. Tho' his Repentance had but a little time to breath in, yet how buſie, how active, how vigorous was it in all the great and important parts of hearty Mortification?

1. We may view here in the Text, his deep ſenſe and humble acknowledgment of his former ſins. *We ſuffer juſtly*, ſaith he to the other Thief; *we receive no more than the due rewards of our former Deeds. Magnum enim pœnitentiæ ſignum*

in

in pœna ſua acquieſcere. It is a great ſign of true Repentance, ſaith *Grotius, patiently to bear the Puniſhment which is inflicted, or for the Malefactor to approve of his own Condemnation. Confeſſion* is called by the Father, the *Vomit of the Soul,* it ſhews *Sin* to be bitter to us when we caſt it up by ſuch open Acknowledgments. And now, I pray, what Comfort is there in this Example for ſuch Preſumptuous ſinners amongſt us, who put off their Repentance to the time of *Sickneſs?* How rarely do we find in them ſuch a deep ſenſe of their *Sins,* and a ſerious Humiliation for them? How lame are their Confeſſions, and for the moſt part but General? Miniſters, when they come to Viſit them in their Sickneſs, are forced to tranſgreſs the bounds of Modeſty, before they can extort a ſlender acknowledgment of their Faults. Tho' they have ſinned in an impudent manner, and never were aſhamed to diſhonour God, and affront their Saviour; yet now they are unwilling to take ſhame to themſelves, but deſire their ſins may be buried with them in the ſame Grave. Thus the Clinicks of the Age, do generally fall ſhort of

of the Example in the Text, as to this part of Repentance. But,

2dly, Let us Conſider, that this honeſt Penitent Thief was not only ſenſible of his ſin, and willing to make an open Confeſſion of it; but he ſhewed great Charity to his fellow Thief, and labour'd to bring him to an hearty Humiliation for his Tranſgreſſions. See how his Compaſſion to his Soul diſplays it ſelf, in his paſſionate Expoſtulation with him? *What*, ſaith he, *doſt thou not fear God? Is this a time for thee to revile this Innocent Perſon, who has done nothing amiſs? It would better become thee to reflect upon thy former Life, to call thy paſt Sins to remembrance, and ſpend that little Breath which is left thee, in ſuing for a Pardon at the Throne of Grace. Sure thine Heart muſt be harder than an Adamant, if Death, that King of Terrours, has no Darts that can pierce it. What*, ſaith he, *doſt thou not at ſuch a time as this fear God?* Thus great, thus remarkable was his Charity to the Soul of his Fellow-Thief. But alas! how cold is that Charity which the Clinicks of the Age expreſs for the *Souls* of others? Tho' they have been all their life

life time Factors for Hell, and ſaved the Devil the labour of Tempting men to ſin: Tho' they have delighted formerly in *putting the Bottle to their Neighbours mouth*, and even gloried when they have been able to drink them into Brutes: Tho' they have enticed them to all ſorts of Luſts, and made them bear a ſhare in all their Debaucheries; yet in their ſickneſs, how ſeldom do they ſend for their boon Companions? How ſeldom do they endeavour to rid their Souls of the guilt of other Mens ſins? If their Brethren in Iniquity come at any time unſent for, and have ſo much Civility as to Viſit them in their ſickneſs, how frothy, at leaſt how unſeaſonable is their Diſcourſe? When do we hear them reminding them of their former Debaucheries, telling them the danger of them, and by ghoſtly Admonitions labouring to draw them out of the ſnare of the Devil? And ſince they are ſo unlike this penitent Thief, in their Charity for the Souls of others, they have little reaſon to encourage themſelves by his Example. But,

3dly, Conſider farther, what a ſtrong prodigious Faith did live and act in this penitent

penitent Thief when he was a dying? We find in the Text, he believed Christ to have been a *Just Person*, even when he was numbred among Transgressors: He pronounces that our Saviour had *done nothing amiss*, notwithstanding the great *Sanhedrim* had pronounc'd him *worthy of Death*, yea, the Death of the Cross, and fit to be hanged between *two Thieves*. This was a strange prodigious Faith indeed! And yet did it exert more prodigious Acts than these, for he farther believed, that Christ had a *Kingdom*, and that a Kingdom of another World; and therefore he saith to our Saviour, at the point of Death, *Lord remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdom*. What a strong prodigious Faith was here! The wisest of the *Jews* dreamt of nothing so much as a *Temporal Kingdom*; yea, his own Disciples were deficient in this great Article of their Faith: They are for sitting at his Right hand, and at his Left hand, in some worldly Empire. Nay, after Christ had given several Checks to their misguided Ambition, we find them still harping on this string, and at the very time of his Ascension, putting this foolish

Question

Queſtion to him, *Lord, Wilt thou at this time reſtore again the Kingdom unto* Iſrael, *Act.* 1. 6. But this penitent Thief deſires no Earthly Glories; he begs not to ſit at his Right hand or at his Left; but, *Lord,* ſaith he, *remember me after Death, when thou comeſt into thy Kingdom.* Theſe are ſtrange and wonderful Acts of his Faith, and yet not all that are here recorded in the Text; for it ſeems he believed Chriſt to have been both able and willing to ſave him, which is in effect, to own him for a *Mediatour:* Hence we find him making ſolemn and earneſt Addreſſes to him for Mercy; *Lord,* ſaith he, *remember me when thou comeſt into thy Kingdom.* One would think theſe Circumſtances which I have mention'd, namely, his deep Senſe of his Sins, his humble Confeſſion of them, his Charity to the Soul of his Fellow Thief, and his ſtrange and prodigious Faith; I ſay, one would think theſe Circumſtances ſo wonderful, and ſo extraordinary, that they were ſufficient of themſelves to evidence the ſincerity of his Repentance, how ſhort ſoever it was; and yet by way of Overplus, we have the Teſtimony of our Saviour himſelf

himſelf concerning it, *This day*, ſaith our Saviour, *thou ſhalt be with me in Paradiſe.* Sure that Repentance muſt be ſincere and perfect which enters into Heaven, paſſeth into Paradiſe, and makes ſo notorious a Thief, all on a ſudden, ſo fit a Companion for the Holy Jeſus. And now let us enquire, what matter of Comfort here can be for the bold Daring Sinners of the Times? Have they any reaſon to expect ſuch a lively, vigorous, and extraordinary Faith? Or is it poſſible they ſhould be ſo well aſſured of the ſincerity of their Repentance? The Age of Miracles did expire long ago, and God having abundantly confirmed the Truths of the Goſpel by mighty Signs and Wonders, did reſolve to leave the ſucceeding Ages of the Church to the ordinary Means of Grace. How then can we expect at the Hour of Death, to find ſuch a wonderful Faith wrought in thoſe profligate Wretches, who have all their Life time deſpiſed Gods Miniſters, quenched all the Motions of his Holy Spirit, trampled on the Blood of the New Covenant, and ſhamefully abuſed all the ordinary Methods and Diſpenſations of the Goſpel?

And as we cannot expect to find in the Clinicks of the Age such a prodigious and extraordinary Faith, as was in this penitent Thief; so neither is it possible they should be so well assur'd of the sincerity of their Repentance, as he was. I am willing to be as Charitable to these Penitents, as the Salvation of their Souls will allow me to be: And therefore let us suppose such Presumptuous sinners to be deeply sensible of their sins, and willing to Confess them: Let us suppose them sending for their Debauch'd Companions, to remind them of Eternity, and the great danger of delaying their Repentance: Nay farther let us suppose them *watering their Couches with their Tears*, and making most solemn Protestations of better Obedience, if God should restore them to their former Health. Supposing all this be done by the Clinicks of the Age, is it possible for a Minister to afford them a Cordial, or any solid Comfort from this Example of the Text? For my part, I must declare, that I think it impossible. We may hope well, in the Judgment of Charity; but to give them any such Assurance, as this penitent

tent Thief, is beyond the power and skill of the wiſeſt Miniſter; for the *Heart is deceitful above all things*; and ſince Miniſters are not Omniſcious, as our Saviour was, they cannot paſs an infallible Judgment upon the ſincerity of ſuch a late Repentance. When *Eſau* had loſt his Birth-right for a *Meſs of Pottage*, did not he ſhed as hearty and unfeigned Tears, as theſe ſuppoſed Penitents can do, and yet it is ſaid, *found no place for Repentance*? Did not *Judas* run to the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*? Did he not confeſs publickly, that *he had betrayed the Innocent Blood*? Nay, did he not throw down the *Thirty peices of Silver*? And ſure if he had not been in earneſt, ſuch a Covetous Wretch would never have parted with his Mony; and yet we know his Repentance was not right. Alas! the Horrours of Conſcience, and the ghaſtly Apparitions of Death, will force men to do many things which God will not accept of, becauſe they proceed from fear of Puniſhment, and not from the Love of him. Nay, let me add yet farther, that ſad Experience has ſet its Seal to this Obſervation, That many ſuch Penitents, who have made

the moſt ſolemn Proteſtations of better Obedience in the time of their Sickneſs; when God has reſtored them in Mercy to their former Health, they have with *the Dog return'd to their Vomits, and with the Sow to their wallowings in the Mire.* Thus you ſee, that Repentance of the Thief in the Text was ſo remarkable, ſo wonderful, ſo extraordinary in all the parts of it, as will afford little ſolid Comfort to *repenting Sinners* at the Hour of Death.

4*ly.* This Repentance of the Thief will be found yet farther extraordinary, and ſuch as can afford little Comfort to the Clinicks of the Age, if we conſider thoſe great and extraordinary Temptations he had to grapple with. Chriſt was now in his worſt Eſtate, in the very loweſt degree of his Humiliation; there was no Beauty, no Form, no Comelineſs in him, that he ſhould be deſired: The *Chief Prieſts*, the *Scribes*, and the *Elders* mocked him; all that paſſed by reviled him, *wagging their Heads*: Of his own Diſciples, ſome denied him, and all of them ſhamefully and moſt ungratefully forſook him: This poor penitent Thief was the only Confeſſor

feſſor he had. And what Inducements had he at this time to own him? He could expect no Wordly Advantages; all that he could promiſe himſelf was only this, that as he was now Crucified as a Malefactor only; ſo for ſuch his Confeſſion, his Torments would have been enhanced, and he perſecuted as a Martyr: And can now the Clinicks of the Age ſhew us any ſuch extraordinary Repentance? Is Chriſt now under the ſame Circumſtances of Pain and Ignominy that he was then? Do not all our Creeds tell us that he is now *at the Right Hand of God?* That *He is made the Head of all things both in Heaven and in Earth*: And will it be any ſuch heroick Act of Faith now to ſeek unto ſuch a Glorious and Triumphant Saviour? Sure there is a vaſt difference between the caſe of the Thief, and the caſe of the preſumptuous Sinners. The Thief had no inducements to fly to Chriſt for ſuccour; and theſe have none to fly to but their Saviour There is therefore but little ſolid comfort for ſuch Penitents in the Example of the Text.

5*ly*. The caſe of the Thief will yet further

further be found extraordinary, if we consider the time when he obtained Mercy; it was no ordinary time, but a time when God was shewing a publick Act of Grace and Mercy to the World. God at this time was giving his own Son, out of great love to Mankind: And therefore it might seem proper and well, becoming so solemn a time, that there should be some Monument of this Infinite Mercy. It may possibly deserve your serious observation, that God Almighty did always something extraordinary to grace the several Passages of our Saviours Mediatorship. We know at his Nativity, a Glorious Star shone in the Air, and conducted the Wise Men of the *East* to the Son of Righteousness. At his Resurrection all the Graves were opened; and those Patriarchs which had slept for many years, had a Goal-delivery, and graced the solemnity of our Saviours Resurrection. The Holy Martyr *Ignatius* has left it upon Record, *that those very Saints who were with our Saviour at* Easter, *had a share also in his Ascention upon* Holy-Thursday. What wonder then if we find one Penitent Thief converted, in a miraculous manner, to grace

grace his Crucifixion? Chriſt was now triumphing over Principalities and Powers; he was now making a ſhew of them openly on the Croſs: That therefore he ſhould bear off the Field, the prey which he had taken out of the Jaws of the Enemy, was no more than was due to the ſolemnity of his Triumphs. Very pretty is St. *Auſtin*'s Remark upon this paſſage; *Chriſt*, ſaith he, *in reſcuing the poor Thief upon the Croſs, was but quits with the Devil; for the Devil took Man from God out of the midſt of Paradiſe:* Chriſt takes this poor Man from Satan when he was no leſs than in the very Jaws of Hell. Satan ruin'd Man on the Forbidden Tree, and Chriſt ſaves him on the Curſed Tree. How proper for this occaſion was ſuch an Experiment of this Sovereign Balſom? There is then no queſtion to be made, but this Converſion of the Thief was an extraordinary Act of Grace; *Novæ & inſolitæ quædam Divinæ Virtutis Efficacia; it was*, ſaith *Grotius*, *an unuſual Ray of Divinity, which darting, at this time, into the Thiefs heart, wrought ſuch ſtrange and wonderful Repentance in him.* And indeed the Concluſion will run thus high, if we

lay all the premiſed circumſtances together, that the Grace of God ſhould work in this Thief ſuch a deep ſenſe of his ſin; ſuch an open confeſſion of it, ſuch wonderful Charity for his Neighbour, ſuch a miraculous Faith, yea ſuch a compleat change, all on a ſudden, and that without means; yea, as you have heard, againſt means, and amidſt the greateſt Temptations to the contrary: All theſe ſhew the Converſion of this Thief to have been perfectly extraordinary, and ſuch as was deſigned to Grace the Crucifixion of our Saviour. And now, I pray, what comfort can this example afford to the Clinicks of the Age? Do they think that God Almighty is obliged to work Miracles for their Converſion? And yet it is a known Rule in Divinity, that extraordinary Caſes muſt not be made a Rule. Becauſe God did once tranſlate *Enoch* into Heaven, muſt any of us expect the ſame Honour and Dignity? Becauſe ſome Saints aroſe with Chriſt, and aſcended with him into Heaven, is this any ground for our Faith, that we ſhall riſe before the General Reſurrection? So, becauſe God did once, in a wonderful manner, Convert a poor

Thief

Thief at the hour of Death; we must not presume upon such extraordinary Mercy. It will better become us to be terrified at the example of the other Thief. We read he was left unconverted, and his Soul dropt into Hell sooner than his Carcase was taken from the Cross. If thou dost reject the ordinary means of Grace, which God does plentifully afford thee, thou canst not promise thy self extraordinary mercy at the hour of Death: in all probability it will fare with thee, as it did with the Unconverted Thief.

SER-

SERMON VII.

Luke xxiii. 39,---43.

And one of the Malefactors, which were hanged, railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thy self and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds, but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdom. And Jesus said unto him,

him, Verily I ſay unto thee, to day thou ſhalt be with me in Paradiſe

I Told you the laſt Lords Day, that I did not deſign to examine all the parts of ſo large a Text, but only take occaſion from them to ſhew you two things.

Firſt, That there is no encouragement at all for a late Death-bed Repentance in the Example of the Penitent Thief. And,

Secondly, Take occaſion from the Example of the Impenitent Thief, to ſhew you, that a late Death-bed Repentance is a thing moſt dangerous, if not in ſome ſort impoſſible.

Firſt, I ſhew'd you at large, the laſt Lords day, that there is no encouragement at all in the Example of the Penitent Thief, for a late Death-bed Repentance. For this example, in many things, is vaſtly different from the condition of preſumptuous Sinners in our times. This in all probability was the firſt Call that was ever given to this poor Thief, the firſt opportunity that was ever offer'd him

him to be acquainted with Chriſt; whereas the Clinicks of the Age have had the means of Grace plentifully afforded them; they have had Line upon Line, and Precept upon Precept, publick and private Admonitions to Repent. I ſhew'd you further, how wonderful and extraordinary his Repentance was. We find here in the Text, his deep ſenſe of his ſins, his humble and publick Confeſſion of his Faults; his great Charity and Compaſſion for the Soul of the other Thief: a Faith alſo ſtrange and Prodigious, ſuch as pronounc'd Chriſt a juſt and innocent Perſon, when the great *Sanhedrim* had condemn'd him for a Malefactor; ſuch as own'd Chriſt to have a Kingdom, and that a Kingdom of another World, ſuch as made him addreſs to Chriſt for Mercy, own him in his loweſt degree of Humiliation, when all the World revil'd him, and his own Diſciples forſook him. Such a change as this, ſo ſudden, and ſo perfect, could not be wrought without a Miraculous Power; and was deſign'd as I ſhew'd you, to grace the Paſſion and Crucifixion of our Saviour, but not to encourage preſumptuous ſinners to delay

their

their Repentance. As therefore we cannot think God obliged to work Miracles for the Converſion of bold daring Sinners, ſo we cannot adminiſter any ſolid comfort to them at the hour of Death, from this example of the Penitent Thief. All the kindneſs the Text will allow us to ſhew unto bold preſumptuous ſinners, is only to awaken them in the time of their health, to a ſerious and timely Repentance, from the Dreadful example of the Impenitent Thief. This wicked Malefactor, as he had lived a moſt wicked Life, ſo he dies a moſt miſerable Death; his Body was not ſooner buried in *Golgotha*, than his Soul was hurried to the place of Torments. All the Charity of the Penitent Thief is loſt upon him; all his Admonitions prove ineffectual; he dies Reviling and Blaſpheming his Saviour, and conſequently could not be long from receiving the juſt but dreadful rewards of ſuch final impenitency.

I come therefore in the next place to ſhew you from this Example,

Secondly, That a late Repentance is a thing moſt dangerous, if not in ſome ſort impoſſible. The generality of Mankind

kind are ready enough to acknowledge the abſolute Neceſſity of Repentance: They know it is as poſſible for a Camel, with his great Bunch upon his Back, to paſs through the Eye of a Needle, as for an impenitent Sinner, made groſs with the ſins of many years, to enter in at the ſtrait Gate of Heaven; but yet with *Felix*, they put off their Repentance to a more Convenient Seaſon: They think they ſhall have time enough to repent, when ſickneſs calls upon them to pay their laſt debt to Nature. Indeed few men love their ſins ſo well, as that they are willing to be damned for them: And therefore, however they live, they earneſtly deſire they may die like Chriſtians; with *Balaam* they wiſh *their death may be like the Death of the Righteous*; and reſolve not to go out of this World in an impenitent State. But yet at preſent they think they are not at leiſure to prepare for ſuch a death as this. Alas, they are now young and healthful; their Pulſe beats evenly, and their Blood moves briskly; they have not the leaſt Symptom of any Diſtemper, to make them fear the approaches of Death; and therefore, as yet, they

fancy

fancy they may ſafely delay their Repentance; they fancy it will be time enough to begin to live well, when they ſhall be allowed to live no longer. The great Enemy of Mankind hath not, in all his Magazine, a more deadly Engine for the deſtruction of Souls. So great, ſo fatal are the dangers which attend ſuch practiſes, that Trembling is fitter than Words to expreſs them; however the madneſs and folly of them will in ſome meaſure appear in theſe following conſiderations.

1*ſt*. The madneſs and folly of putting off Repentance to the time of Sickneſs, or the hour of Death, will appear if we ſeriouſly conſider the uncertainty of Death. *We cannot*, ſaith *Solomon*, *boaſt our ſelves of to morrow*; we cannot command the next fleeting minute. Death lurks in every corner, and waits for us in every Place. There is not a crumb of Bread we eat, nor a drop of Liquor that we drink; but if it goes a little a-wry, Phyſitians tell us may be our ruin. Hiſtories afford us a thouſand inſtances of ſudden death. *Manlius Torquatus* died whilſt he was at Supper; *Cn. Bebius*, asking the hour of the day, met

met with his laſt hour; two of the Rom. Emperors ſtept into their Graves, even whilſt they were putting on their Shoes; *C. Servilius* died whilſt he was ſtanding in the Market; *M. Terentius* whilſt he was a Writing; and to name but one more, and that out of our own Chronicles, Mr. *H. Morris* died at a game of Tennis. Thus uncertain is the time of Death, and therefore their madneſs is both great and certain, who procraſtinate their Repentance till the hour of Death. We know not how ſoon this may come, we know not how ſuddenly it may ſurprize us. Were not *Zimri* and *Cosbi* ſmitten in the very Act of their Uncleanneſs? Were not *Ammon* and *Belſhazzar* taken in the midſt of their drunken Cups? *Corah* and his factious Crew were ſwept away in their Rebellion: And to name no more, the Covetous Fool in the Goſpel received his Summons to another World, even when he was ſinging a *requiem* to his Soul in this; ſaying, *Soul take thine Eaſe, thou haſt Goods laid up for many Years.* What folly then will it be, to put off Repentance till the time of Sickneſs, or the hour of Death? But ſince Men are of the

this Humour, let us, for once, take them at their words; and try if they will repent one day, at leaſt, before they die? This they profeſs they are willing to do, becauſe they know their Salvation depends upon it. But if in truth they are in earneſt; if they are unfeignedly reſolved to Repent one day before they die, they muſt begin the Work this very day; for what know they but this may be their laſt day? Sure they have not made a Covenant with Death, or an Agreement with Hell. Sure it is not in their Power to diſpoſe of Times and Seaſons: Their Breath is in the Hands of God, and not in their own. Hear what *Solomon* ſaith, Eccleſ. 9. 12. *Man knoweth not his time; as the Fiſhes that are caught in an evil Net, and as the Birds are caught in the Snare; ſo are the Sons of Men ſnared in an evil time, when it cometh ſuddenly upon them.* If therefore men have any real kindneſs for their Souls, they will not run the hazard of an uncertain futurity; they will rather think it reaſonable to follow our Saviours advice, Mat. 25. 13. *Watch, for ye do not know the day nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh.*

2*ly*. A late Repentance will further be found a thing full of danger, if not in ſome ſort impoſſible, if we conſider that the time of Sickneſs, or the hour of Death is a very improper, and unſeaſonable time for Repentance. If Men be not ſurprized by ſudden Death, or ſnatcht away in wrath before *the Pots perceive the Thorns*, as the Pſalmiſt phraſes it; yet how often are they ſeiz'd on by ſuch kind of Diſeaſes, as render their Repentance a thing impoſſible? *Seneca* ſpeaks of a *Morbus inſanabilis qui animo afficiat, & mentem concutiat*, ſuch a violent Diſtemper, as either deprives Men wholly of their Reaſon, or elſe diſturbs the uſe of their Underſtandings: And tho' he ſpeaks but of one in the ſingular number, yet Phyſitians tell of many in their Books, ſuch as the *Coma*, the *Lethargy*, the *Carus*, the *Appoplexy*, the *Catoche*, *Catalepſiis*, *Eriſipylas*, *Phrenzy*, *Mania*, and ſeveral others. Now has any preſumptuous Sinner a protection from Heaven againſt theſe drowſie ſtupifyed Diſtempers, ſuch as will deprive him of his Reaſon, and conſequently incapacitate him for any works of Piety and Religion? but ſupoſe the ſinner ſhould eſcape

eſcape ſuch Diſeaſes as theſe, do not other Diſeaſes render the time of Death a moſt improper ſeaſon for the work of Repentance? Let but ſuch a preſumptuous Sinner ſometimes beſtow a viſit on his ſick Friends and Nieghbours, and then let him judge whether the time of ſickneſs be a fit time to perform ſuch a difficult and important work as Repentance is. May he not now ſee how troubled and diſturbed their thoughts are? How uneaſie and diſturbed their Minds? How ſtrangely doth their Reaſon and Underſtanding decay? How faſt their Memories and Senſes fail them, whilſt their Bodies groan under great anguiſh and extremity of Pain? And is this, think ye, a proper time to prepare for Eternity? is ſo much Weakneſs able to wreſtle with Principalities and Powers? Is he, who cannot help himſelf, fit to encounter ſin at its greateſt ſtrength, and work in himſelf all the pious habits of the contrary Vertues? We do not ordinarily account them wiſe Men, who leave their Worldly Affairs to be ſettled at this time. What ſtupendious folly then will it be to leave all our Spiritual Concerns, matters of ever-

lasting Moment and Importance to be transacted at our dying hour? The best of Men are so indispos'd in the time of sickness, that they are unfit to ingage themselves in any Religious Exercises. Good *Hezekiah*, as pious and excellent a Prince as he was, was able in his sickness to do no more than chatter as a Crane. Tho' none at other times knew better how to pray, yet now it seems he can but chatter, and is obliged, by reason of his Infirmity, to beg the prayers of the Prophet *Esay*: And as it was with *Hezekiah*, so it happens unto other holy Men; which occasioned that advice of St. *James*, Chap. 5. 14. *Is any Sick among you let him call for the Elders of the Church, and let them pray over him.* And if good men, if such as *Hezekiah* be rendred by sickness unfit for Prayer, and the other exercises of Religion; how must sickness indispose the wicked, who never were acquainted with these Religious Exercises before? They of all men are most unfit to set about such Duties as these: For besides those exquisite Pains they labour under; besides all those indispositions both of Body and Mind, which they have

have common with other men; the ſad remembrances of their former ſins, and the more dreadful apprehenſions of an incenſed Deity, will now inhaunce their troubles; they will fill their Souls with unſpeakable horrors, and even deter them from endeavouring to make their peace with Heaven. And beſides all this, Satan, we may be ſure, will be buſie at this time to draw theſe ſinners to deſpair: Tho' he uſed to tell them in the time of their health, that it was too ſoon to Repent, yet this malicious Fiend will now ſuggeſt that it is too late; he will tell them the Door of Mercy is now ſhut upon them, and that God, whom they refuſed to hear all their life long, will now be as backward to hear them. All theſe conſiderations laid together, will, I believe, make a late Repentance a thing moſt dangerous, if not in ſome ſort impoſſible.

3*ly*, a late Death-bed Repentance will appear a thing moſt dangerous, if not in ſome ſort impoſſible, if we conſider what is required to the compleating and perfecting of Repentance. Now Repentance doth denote our ceaſing to do evil, and our learning to do well:

Our rooting out all the inveterate habits of Vice, and planting in our Souls the contrary habits of Vertue: And this ſure muſt be a work of great difficulty, and conſequently of time. For ſin, as it grows up by degrees, and gains ſtrength by cuſtom and continuance, ſo it muſt be conquered by degrees, abate by a long ſeries and ſucceſſion of contrary Acts. Every ſtep we made forward muſt be repeated backward; the Web we formerly ſpun, muſt now all be unravelled: And believe it, we will find it a work of time and difficulty too, to correct our impetuous inclinations, to render our ſenſual Appetites obſequious to Reaſon, our Paſſions regular and ſteddy, and cleanſe our Souls from vanity, ſloth, perverſneſs and all vitious diſtempers. It takes good men many months and years to conquer one impetuous Luſt, and ſubdue one unreaſonable Paſſion; and do theſe preſumptuous Sinners expect to conquer all their Luſts in a trice, to blow them away with a little breath, a Lord have mercy upon us, and the like? And as Vice is not eaſily conquered, ſo neither is Virtue ſo eaſily obtained: It is not like *Jonahs*

nahs Gourd, which grows up in a night; no, it is a tender and delicate Plant, it grows but ſlowly, it needs much pains to cultivate it, much care to guard it, much time to mature it, eſpecially in the untoward Soil of corrupt Nature, and the unkindly weather of this wicked World. And if it be ſo hard a matter to obtain one ſingle Vertue, what pains, what time is required to get the whole circle of them; *to add* as St. *Peter* ſpeaks, *to our Faith, Virtue; to Virtue, Knowledge; to Knowledge, Temperance*, and ſo on? Is this, think ye, the work of a dying hour, the buſineſs only of a day, or the ſhort time of ſickneſs? The whole time of our life ſeems too little for it, and would in truth be ſo, if God were not ſo Merciful, as to crown our imperfect Endeavours with his gracious aſſiſtance, and render them in ſome ſort perfect by his favourable Acceptance. One thing more I ſhall add unto this Head, which you may learn from Rom. 2. 7. where St. *Paul* tells us, that we muſt *by patient continuance in well doing, ſeek for glory, and honour, and immortality.* It ſeems we cannot expect Eternal life, unleſs we

conquer Sin, and gain the contrary habits of Vertue, yea, which is more yet, we muſt *patiently continue in well-doing*. All this will certainly make a Death-bed Repentance a thing moſt dangerous, if not in ſome ſort impoſſible, as the Prophet *Jeremiah* repreſents it, Chap. 13.23. *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the Leopard his ſpots? Then may you alſo do good, who are accuſtomed to do evil.*

4*ly*, A late Repentance will yet farther appear to be a thing moſt dangerous, if not in ſome ſort impoſſible, if we conſider how little it is ſuch a Preſumptuous Sinner is able to do in the Time of Sickneſs. I grant, ſuch a perſon may expreſs ſome Grief and Sorrow for Sin; but ſince this Sorrow proceeds more from fear of Puniſhment, than any real love of God and Vertue, it cannot be that *Godly Sorrow, which worketh Repentance to Salvation, never to be repented of*. I grant yet farther, that ſuch a ſinner may with great earneſtneſs beg pardon for his ſins, reſtore perhaps his Ill-gotten Goods, and which is the moſt he can do, make ſolemn Reſolutions of Amendment and better

Obedience

Obedience, if God ſhould reſtore him to his former Health. This is all ſuch a ſinner can poſſible do at the Hour of Death; but will all this amount to a ſincere and hearty Repentance? Pray, let it be conſider'd, what I told you the laſt Lord's Day, namely, that Experience has frequently declared theſe dying Reſolutions to be but forc'd and feign'd; and ſuch Penitents, when by God's Mercy they have been reſtor'd to their former Health, notwithſtanding all their Proteſtations, have *with the Dog returned to their Vomits, and with the Sow to their wallowing in the Mire.* And have we any reaſon then, to look on ſuch Reſolutions as theſe to be hearty Repentances? Beſides, a Reſolution to repent and amend, is not properly to Repent and Amend. Apply this to other Caſes, and you'l eaſily find the falſity of it. Suppoſe a man reſolves to learn the Art of Sailing, does this Reſolution preſently make him a skilful Mariner? No more does a Reſolution to repent and amend, make a true Penitent or honeſt Chriſtian: Such a Change as this is not ſo eaſily wrought ſuch a Reformation is not ſo ſuddenly produc'd

produc'd. The *Mathematicks*, or any other Art, may more eaſily be learned, than the Art of *Living-well*; becauſe all Arts muſt be acquired by repeated Acts; and ſince Corrupt Nature is more oppoſite to the *Art of Living-well*, than to any other, it is impoſſible it ſhould be attained by a bare unactive Reſolution. Now tho' all this do abundantly ſhew a late Death-bed Repentance to be a thing moſt dangerous, and in ſome ſort impoſſible; and yet ſeeing this is a Subject of moſt ſerious importance.

5*ly*, I will in the Fifth place add one Conſideration more, which will ſhew it yet to be more dangerous, and in ſome ſort impoſſible: And pray let it be Conſider'd, that the Day of Grace may be loſt, before the Day of Death come. Sure, it is not poſſible that ſuch ſinners ſhould repent, without the aſſiſtance of God's Grace; and yet before their death they may ſin to ſuch an height, as to forfeit this aſſiſtance of God's Grace. It is the vain fancy of ſuch preſumptuous ſinners, that the *Day of Grace* and the *Day of Life* run parallel, and that as long as the one laſts, the other will laſt

laſt too; and therefore they encourage themſelves in their wickedneſs, thinking they ſhall have time enough to repent when they come to dye. But if this Fancy of theirs be vain, the delaying of Repentance till the Hour of Death, muſt needs be a thing moſt dangerous, and in ſome ſort impoſſible. Now it is very plain from Scripture, that God has ſet bounds to his Patience, and limits to his Mercy: Tho' he bears very much with ſinners, and waits a long time to be gracious; yet he has told us expreſly, *Gen. 6. 3. My Spirit ſhall not always ſtrive with Men*: We find in the following Verſe, that God allowed the *Anti-Deluvians*, or Old World, a long Day of Grace, he promiſed to bear with them 120 Years: now during this time he ſent unto them *Noah*, a Preacher of *Righteouſneſs*: Beſides thoſe Admonitions and frequent Calls the Holy Man gave them to repent, his very building the Ark, was a conſtant daily Sermon to them; but when they would not hearken unto this Preacher, but ſcoffed at his Diſcourſes, God did not tarry for the time of their death, but with a dreadful Deluge *ſwept them all away.*

In

In *Luc.*19.41, 42. we find our Saviour weeping over *Jeruſalem*, and declaring their wretched Condition in ſuch like doleful Accents as theſe: *O that thou hadſt known, even thou, at leaſt in this thy Day, the things which belong unto thy Peace, but now are they hid from thine Eyes.* It ſeems the Day of Grace has an Evening, before the Night of Death approaches: The things of Peace were hid from the Eyes of *Jeruſalem*, before they were cloſed by the Hand of Death. To this we may add what we read in *Prov.* 1. 28. *Then ſhall they call upon me, but I will not anſwer; they ſhall ſeek me early, but ſhall not find me.* There is a certain meaſure of Iniquity, God is ſaid in Scripture to allow Sinners to fill up; and when this Meaſure is full, they may call upon him in vain, they may ſeek him early and late, but he will not hear them. And as is it thus plain from theſe Texts, that the Day of Grace may be loſt before the Day of Death; ſo the ſame Truth may be evidenced by ſundry Scripture Examples. God allowed *Cain* a Day of Grace, and during the Time of this Day, *Cain* tho' he ſinned again and again, yet he heard nothing but this

this *Still Voice, if thou doſt well, ſhalt not thou be accepted? but if thou doſt ill, Sin lieth at the door.* But when all the Means of Grace were loſt upon him; when notwithſtanding the frequent Admonitions of his Father, and ſolemn Remembrances of Heaven, he added ſin to ſin, till at laſt, he fill'd up the Meaſure of his Iniquity, by murdering Righteous *Abel*; His ſeaſon of Grace was then gone, and God tells him in plain terms, that he was then *accurſed from the Earth.* Now this hapned unto him ſome hundreds of years before his death. Another Inſtance we have in *Eſau*, whom the Apoſtle ſtyles a *Prophane Perſon*: He was an idle, unprofitable Fellow, one who ſpent too much of his time in Gaming and impertinent Recreations; and to all his other ſins he added, the ſelling of his *Birthright*, on which were entailed all the *Bleſſings of Heaven*; and this indeed ſhewed him to be a *Prophane Perſon* with a witneſs? one that preferr'd his Sports and Recreations before God and his Religion. Now this great ſin fill'd up the Meaſure of his Iniquity, ſo that his Day of Grace expir'd ſome 50 years before his death, as Divines compute

compute : And tho' now he endeavour'd to regain his *Birth-right*; tho' he ſought the Bleſſing earneſtly and with Tears, yet he was rejected, there was *no place found for Repentance*, *Heb.* 12.17. I ſhall add but one Inſtance more, and it ſhall be the Example of wicked *Saul*, God had ſtriven with *Saul* many ways, and many times: He had given him Riches and Honours, yea, all the Glories of a Kingdom, and which were more than all, the gifts of his Spirit; but when *Saul* multiplied his Tranſgreſſions, and notwithſtanding ſuch ſignal Tokens of his Favour, rebelled againſt the Lord, God then caſt him off; yea, he ſent an *Evil Spirit* to torment him, and would no longer hearken to his Cries, as he ſadly confeſſes to the Witch of *Endor*. Now this Rejection hapned 36 years before he died, according to *Joſephus*'s Chronology. Thus God does withdraw the Aſſiſtance of his Spirit from ſinners long before they dye : In their Life time he delivers them up to a Spirit of ſlumber and of giddineſs: He hardens their Hearts, and ſears their Conſciences; and gives them over to a Reprobate

ſenſe

ſenſe. And ſince theſe things are ſo, it will be too late for the Clinicks of the Age to Repent when they come to dye. If they will obſtinately go on in a Courſe of wickedneſs, and multiply their Tranſgreſſions, till the meaſure of their Iniquity be full, then they are beyond the poſſibility of Salvation; they have then forfeited the Aſſiſtance of God's Grace, without which it is impoſſible they ſhould repent. It will therefore be ſafe for ſinners to follow St. *Pauls* Advice, *To day if you will hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts*: As the Prophets Exhorts, *Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near.* Let not this preſent Diſcourſe, this preſent Opportunity be loſt upon you; for, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Now is the accepted time, now is the day of ſalvation*: Begin this very moment to reſolve againſt thy ſins; come this day to the Holy Sacrament, and there vow and ſwear, that thou wilt hereafter keep all Gods *Righteous Judgments.* I ſhall conclude all with the excellent Advice of the Son of *Sirach*: *Say not, God's Mercy is great, and he will be pacified for the multitude of thy Sins*: *For*

For Mercy and Wrath is with him; he is mighty to forgive, and to pour out Displeasure; and as his Mercy is great, so are his Corrections also. Therefore make no long tarrying to turn to the Lord, and put not off from day to day: For suddenly shall the Wrath of the Lord come forth, and in thy security thou shalt be destroyed. Humble thy self before thou be sick, and in the time of Sins shew Repentance: Let nothing hinder to pay thy Vows in due time, and defer not till Death to be justified.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ &c.

SER-

2*ly*. To be with Christ, is not only to be with all the Saints, but also with all the Angels of Heaven. St. *Paul* tells us, Heb. 12. 22. *That when we come to the Heavenly Jerusalem, we shall come to an innumerable Company of Angels*. How great must the pleasure be of being acquainted with such Glorious Creatures! How great the Happiness of hearing their ravishing Musick! The Seraphims and Cherubims are continually Blessing and Praising God; and their Heavenly Harmony consists of ten thousand times ten thousand various Voices. So we read Rev. 5. 11. *I heard* (saith St. *John*) *the Voice of many Angels round about the Throne, and the number of them was ten thousand times, ten Thousand, yea even thousands of thousands*: This is the true Musick of the Sphears, and it will certainly be most ravishing, since it is performed by such vast numbers of such Glorious Choristers. This is the great Happiness of the Godly in Heaven, they shall live with the General Assembly of the First-born, and with an innumerable company of Angels, crying out continually with them, *Thou art worthy, O Lord to receive Honour, and Glory and*

Power. But this is not all, for the Godly ſhall not only be with Chriſts Saints and Angels, But

3ly. They ſhall be with Chriſt himſelf. Now the Godly in Heaven ſhall be with Chriſt.

Firſt, In reſpect of his Humility.

Secondly, In reſpect of his Divinity.

Firſt, The Godly ſhall be with Chriſt in reſpect of his Humility. *This day*, ſaith Chriſt, *ſhalt thou be with me*. As ſoon as Chriſt's Soul was ſeparated from his Body, it went to Heaven, and the poor Thiefs went along with it. But the Godly that die now, they ſee not only the Soul, but alſo the Body of Chriſt. Hence St. *Paul*, deſcribing the Happineſs of the Godly in Heaven, tells us, *That they ſhall come to Jeſus, the Mediator of the New Covenaut*. Now Chriſt, as Mediator, was Man as well as God: And it will be part of our Happineſs to be with him as Man. It was one of St. *Auſtins* three wiſhes, *that he might ſee Chriſt in the Fleſh*: But in Heaven we ſhall not only ſee Chriſts Body, but we ſhall ſee all that Glory God has beſtowed upon it there. To this

this purpoſe is our Saviours Prayer, John 17. 24. *Father, I will, that they alſo whom thou haſt given me, may be with me, where I am, that they may behold my Glory, which thou haſt given me.* How great will our Happineſs be, when we ſhall behold all Chriſts Glory? When we ſhall ſee him ſitting at the Right Hand of Power, highly exalted above every Name; yea, even above the moſt Glorious Cherubims and Seraphims. And this Glory of Chriſt will rejoyce us the more, becauſe our Nature is Glorified in him. As a Queen that ſees the Prince in his Glory, delights the more in it, becauſe ſhe looks upon it as her own. So when the Church Triumphant ſhall ſee Chriſt her Husband in all his Glory, ſhe will rejoyce in it, becauſe it is her own Glory. Who can expreſs this part of our Happineſs? *Bleſſed are the Eyes,* ſaith Chriſt, *which ſee thoſe things that you ſee here.* If it were ſuch a bleſſed thing to ſee Chriſt in his ſtate of Humiliation. How great will that Bleſſedneſs be, when we ſhall ſee him in his State of Glory and Exaltation? It will be the buſineſs of God's Saints in Heaven, eternally to follow the Lamb whi-

therſoever he goeth, and admire the Luſtre and Beauty of the Glorified Jeſus. So we are told, 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 10. where it is ſaid, *that when Chriſt ſhall come in the Glory of his Power, he ſhall come to be Glorified in his Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.*

2*ly.* The Godly ſhall be with Chriſt in reſpect of his Divinity. In Heaven we ſhall enjoy the Glorious preſence of the Divine Majeſty. Here we ſhall ſee God, and which is more, we ſhall ſee him as he is. Here it is that we ſhall ſee the King of Heaven in his perfect Beauty, and we ſhall not only ſee him, but we ſhall alſo enjoy him, and have ſweet and raviſhing Communion with all the perſons of the ever bleſſed Trinity: And this is that which is the very height of bliſs. To enjoy the Company of Saints and Angels is happineſs, great beyond our utmoſt imagination; and yet they are but as little drops, if compared to that Ocean of Bliſs which will flow into the Soul upon the enjoyment of God himſelf. It was a noble ſaying of *Luthers, that he had rather be in Hell with God's preſence, than in Heaven without it:* And if the preſence of

of God be thus able to convert even Hell it ſelf into Heaven, the enjoyment of this will certainly make Heaven become what it is ſtyled in Scripture, *an Heaven of Heavens.* This therefore is the Flower of Joy, the Quinteſſence of Comfort, the Crown of Bleſſedneſs, and the very Soul of Heaven. For whilſt we enjoy God, we muſt needs enjoy all things. All that is good did at firſt flow from him, and therefore is more eminently to be found in him, as in its Fountain and Original. All that can delight our Souls, or raviſh our Hearts; all that is lovely and deſirable, are here to be found, in their greateſt perfections: Well then might the Pſalmiſt ſay. Pſal. 16. 11. *In thy Preſence there is fulneſs of Joy, and at thy Right Hand, there are Pleaſures for evermore.* But becauſe ſo Copious, ſo Pleaſant, and ſo edifying a Subject does deſerve better than to be lightly toucht in the cloſe of a Sermon, I ſhall reſerve the fuller handling of it till the next opportunity. Thus ye ſee the top of our Happineſs in Heaven, conſiſts in our enjoyment of the Bleſſed Trinity. And ſince theſe things are ſo, give me leave to exhort you to

acquaint your ſelves with this great Myſtery of the Trinity. The more we know of the Trinity here, the more capable ſhall we be of enjoying Communion with the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt hereafter. When therefore ye go home, meditate on the Leſſons, and other Portions of Scripture which our Church this day recommends to your ſerious conſideration: This is the way to be well acquainted with the Three Perſons of the Bleſſed Trinity, and prepare your ſelves for the happy enjoyment of them in Heaven; which God grant.

SER-

SERMON IX.

Luke xxiv. 43.

To day ſhalt thou be with me in Paradiſe.

I Have formerly made ſome entrance upon theſe Words, and hope now to finiſh them. The Method I propoſed was,

Firſt, To ſhew you, that the Souls of the Godly are immediately admitted to the actual poſſeſſion of Happineſs, upon their departure from the Body.

Secondly, The Happineſs is exceeding great, for it is ſaid here in the Text, *That they ſhall be with Chriſt, and they ſhall be in Paradiſe.*

Firſt, The Souls of the Godly, after their departure from the Body, are immediately admitted to the actual poſſeſſion of Happineſs. There are a ſort of Men in the World they call *Pſycho-pannicletes*, who hold, the Soul after its ſeparation from the Body, ſleeps all the while till the general Reſurrection, and conſequently is neither in a State of Joy or Miſery. *But how do theſe men err, not knowing the Scripture?* For here in the Text, our Saviour ſays unto the Thief, *to day ſhalt thou be with me in Paradiſe.* Paradiſe is a place of Joy and Bliſs, and to be with Chriſt is to be in a ſtate of Happineſs. Now in ſuch a place, and in ſuch a ſtate was this honeſt Thief to be that very day. I named ſeveral Texts for the clearing of this Truth, but I ſhall only name one of them at this time, which you will find, Phil. 1. 21, 22. *I am in a ſtrait betwixt two*, ſaith St. *Paul having a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt, which is far better: Nevertheleſs, to abide in the Fleſh*

Fleſh is more needful for you. As much as if the Apoſtle ſhould have ſaid, I cannot tell whether I ſhould deſire, to live longer, or die ſooner, being preſt with Arguments on both ſides. If I conſult my own good, it is doubtleſs better for me die, and enter preſently into Happineſs; but then if I conſult your convenience, it were better I ſhould live longer in the World to be ſerviceable to your Edification. Now I think it is evident, that if the Apoſtle could have ſuppoſed, that his Soul ſhould have ſlept after Death, and not preſently have entred into the fruition of Bliſs, there could have been no ſtrait in the caſe, nor any diſpute, but that it was better to live ſtill in the World, to continue in the Comforts of a good Conſcience, and of doing good to others, rather than to be in a conſtant Sleep, or in a ſenſleſs ſtate of Stupidity and Inactivity. From theſe places of Scripture it is moſt plain, that the Souls of good Men do not ſleep after Death, but are immediately received into Bliſs, as *Lazarus* was into *Abrahams* Boſom, and this honeſt Thief, in the Text, into Paradiſe.

Se-

Secondly, This Happineſs of the Godly is exceeding great, for they are ſaid,

1*ſt*. To be with Chriſt. And,

2*ly*. To be in Paradiſe.

1. The Godly after Death, are ſaid to be with Chriſt; and how great is the Happineſs which lies couched in theſe words? For we cannot be with Chriſt, but we muſt be with all the Saints, and with all the Angels of Heaven; nay further, we muſt enjoy the ſweet and raviſhing Communion of all the Perſons of the ever Bleſſed Trinity. So much may be gathered from Heb. 12. 22, 23. *We ſhall come*, ſaith St. *Paul*, *to the General Aſſembly of the Firſt-Born*; *to the Spirits of Juſt Men made Perfect*; *to an innumerable company of Angels*, *to God the Judge of all*, *and to Jeſus the Mediator of the New Covenant*. From this place it is moſt plain, that we cannot be with Chriſt, but we muſt be with God, with Angels, and with the Spirits of Juſt Men made perfect: And ſure ſuch Glorious Company cannot but make the Happineſs of Paradiſe exceeding great.

1. I ſhew'd you, that we ſhall in Paradiſe be with all the Saints in Heaven; nor ſhall we barely be with them, but we

we ſhall know them. If the Three Diſciples, who were admitted to Chriſt's Transfiguration, knew *Moſes* and *Elias*, whom they had never ſeen before; no doubt but we, being fully illuminated, and perfectly Glorified in Heaven, ſhall know all the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apoſtles, Saints and Martyrs; and therefore our Saviour ſays expreſly, Luke 13. 28. *That the Godly hereafter ſhall ſee* Abraham, Iſaac *and* Jacob *in the Kingdom of God:* Thus we ſhall ſee and know all the Bleſſed Inhabitants of Heaven: Nor ſhall we only know them, but we ſhall have ſweet Converſe and Communion with them. To this purpoſe is that, Matt. 8. 11. *Many ſhall come from the* Eaſt, *and from the* Weſt, *and ſhall ſit down with* Abraham, *and* Iſaac, *and* Jacob *in the Kingdom of Heaven.* Sit down, that is, as the Original imports, they ſhall feaſt with them. And this ſure does not only denote their mutual Knowledge each of other, but alſo the higheſt Careſſes of Love and Friendſhip, ſuch as this Metaphor of feaſting is uſed in Scripture to denote. And this ſure cannot but mightily inhance the Happineſs of Paradiſe: *David* accounted the Saints of God,

God, the most excellent Persons here upon Earth, and delighted in nothing so much as in their Society: But in Heaven they shall be made perfect; there they shall be freed from all those Human Infirmities and Imperfections which use to allay the solaces of their Conversation. Yea, on the contray, they shall be adorned with all those Excellencies and Advantages which are requisite to make their Society most pleasant and desirable. And indeed we find the Disciples, at the Transfiguration, were so satisfied with the Company of *Moses* and *Elias*, two of these Glorious Inhabitants of Heaven, that they presently cry out, *it is good for us to be here*, and would have built Tabernacles, and have been content to have taken their rest on this side of Heaven. How much greater will their Happiness be, who shall enjoy the most ravishing Society of all the Blessed Inhabitants of Heaven! But,

2. We shall not only enjoy the Society of Saints, but of Angels too, So I have shewn you already, from *Heb.* 12. 22. where it is said, *We shall come to an innumerable Company of Angels.* Angels are

are far more glorious Creatures than the Saints, and therefore the enjoyment of them muſt needs be a farther addition to our happineſs.

3*dly*, We ſhall alſo in Paradiſe be with Chriſt, in reſpect of his Humanity. *To day ſhalt thou be with me in Paradiſe: With me*, whom thou now ſeeſt hanging on the Croſs. It was one of St. *Auſtin*'s three famous Wiſhes to ſee Chriſt in the Body; but it ſhall be our happineſs in Paradiſe, not barely to ſee Chriſt's Body, but alſo to ſee that Glory God has adorn'd it with there. To this purpoſe is that Prayer of our Saviour, *Joh.* 17.24. *Father, I will that they alſo whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my Glory which thou haſt given me.* We ſhall there ſee Chriſt ſitting on the Right hand of Power, highly exalted above *Seraphims* and *Cherubims*; and the ſight of all this Glory will rejoyce us the more, becauſe our Human Nature is glorified in him.

4*thly*, The Godly, by being with Chriſt in Paradiſe, ſhall alſo be with God himſelf. St. *Paul* therefore giving a full Catalogue of that glorious Company

pany we ſhall enjoy in Heaven, tells us, *Heb.* 12.22, 23. that we ſhall not only come to the *General Aſſembly of the Firſt-born*, and *to an innumerable Company of Angels*, and *to Jeſus, the Mediatour of the New Covenant*; but he adds, *to God the Judge of all.* To enjoy the Company of Saints, Angels, and Chriſt, as Man, is Happineſs great, beyond our utmoſt Imagination: But yet they are but as little Drops, if compared to that Ocean of Bliſs, which will flow into the Soul upon the enjoyment of God himſelf. It was a Noble Saying of *Luthers*, That *he had rather be in Hell with Gods preſence, than in Heaven without it.* Now if this Preſence of God be able to convert even Hell it ſelf into a kind of Heaven; the enjoyment of this muſt certainly make Heaven become what it is ſtyled in Scripture, an *Heaven of Heavens.* This therefore is the Flower of our Joy, the Crown of Bleſſedneſs, and the very Soul of Heaven: For whilſt we enjoy God, we muſt needs enjoy all things. All that is good did at firſt flow from him, and is therefore certainly more eminently to be found in Him, as in its Fountain

Fountain and Original. All that can delight our Souls, or raviſh our Hearts; all that is lovely and deſirable, are here to be found in their greateſt perfections. Well then might the *Pſalmiſt* ſay, *Pſal.* 16. 11. *In thy preſence, O God, there is fulneſs of Joy, and at thy right hand there are Pleaſures for evermore.* But becauſe this will be the Quinteſſence of our happineſs in Heaven, we will enquire wherein it will conſiſt. But,

1. Give me leave to premiſe this Caution, That in this *Vale of Miſery* we cannot fully underſtand thoſe Joys which God has prepared for us in Heaven: They are ſuch, ſaith St. *Paul*, as *Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entred into the heart of Man to conceive.* You'l find alſo St. *John* ſpeaking the ſame Truth, 1 *Joh.* 3. 2. *Beloved, now are we the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be; but we know that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him.* As God gave *Moſes* the ſight of the Land of *Canaan* only, from Mount *Nebo*; ſo he gives us a proſpect of the Heavenly, but it is at a diſtance: So that we do not fully here underſtand the greatneſs of our happineſs; and

and it is some honour and advantage to it, that it is so great, as that we cannot fully comprehend it: But so far as God in Scripture has revealed the happiness of Paradise to us, it will chiefly consist in these two Observations:

1*st*, A clear and perfect Knowledge of God, and his Infinite Perfections.

2*dly*, In the enjoyment of him to all Eternity.

1*st*, Our happiness in Paradise will chiefly consist in a clear and perfect Knowledge of God, and his Infinite Perfections. *Knowledge* was the fairest Fruit that ever grew in the Earthly Paradise; and we cannot imagin the Paradise above should be compleat and perfect without it. Knowledge is so sweet and pleasant to the Soul, that the *Roman* Oratour calls it, *Naturale Animæ pabulum*, the *most grateful and palatable Food of the Soul. It is dearer to us*, saith *Aristotle*, *than our Eyes*, *which are usually wasted and worn away in pursuits after it.* Now as Knowledge in the general is thus sweet and pleasant to the Soul, so the nobler the Objects are which we know, the sweeter and more

pleasant

SERMON VIII.

Luke xxiv. 43.

To day ſhalt thou be with me in Paradiſe.

THE Occaſion of which Words we may eaſily learn from the Context: We find *Ver.* 33. that our Bleſſed Saviour was Crucified betwixt two Theives, or Malefactors: Tho' he was *without Sin*, yet, as the Apoſtles ſpeaks, he appeared in the *likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh*; and, as the Prophet *Eſay* tells us, was *numbred with*

the Tranſgreſſors, Chap. 53. 12. Now one of theſe Malefactors begins to rail on our Saviour, ſaying, *If thou be the Chriſt, ſave thyſelf and us*, verſ. 39. It is an Argument of deſperate Wickedneſs, to inſult over ſuch as are in Miſery; it is no leſs than to defie Almighty God, who is the Protector of ſuch as are in miſery, and uſes to avenge their quarrel: And therefore the other Malefactor rebukes him, *ver.* 40. ſaying, *Doſt not thou fear God*, eſpecially *ſince thou art in the ſame Condemnation*? Such as are in Proſperity do ordinarily forget God, but in time of Adverſity moſt men will conſider: When they are approaching towards the *Gates of Death*, they are then generally ſerious, the Thoughts of another World, and the proſpect of a Future State, uſually ſtrikes an awe into their Souls: But this Thief is ſo deſperately wicked, that even on the Croſs, and when Death was near at hand, he deſpiſes God, and reviles our Saviour. But the other Thief gives ample demonſtrations of his ſincere Repentance and Faith in the Meſſiah: For he does not only rebuke his Fellow Thief, and endeavours his Converſion; but he alſo acknow-

acknowledges his Fault, aud patiently ſubmits to the Puniſhment, as a *juſt reward of his evil deeds*, ver. 41. If ſuch ſcandalous perſons that are amongſt us, would, when they are upon their Death-beds, thus take ſhame to themſelves by a free Confeſſion of their Faults: If they would ſend for ſuch perſons, whom in the time of their Health they have endeavour'd to debauch, either by their Example or Counſel, and acquaint them with the danger of *Sin*, and the bitterneſs they then find in it; they would give the World much better demonſtrations of their ſincere Repentance, and much ſurer grounds to hope their Eternal welfare. And as this poor Thief gives ſuch ample demonſtrations of his ſincere Repentance; ſo he gives alſo very good proof of a true and ſtedfaſt Faith in Chriſt; for *ver.* 42. he ſays unto Chriſt Jeſus, *Lord, remember me, when thou comeſt into thy Kingdom.* Ye ſee he believes Chriſt to be the Lord, and to have a Kingdom, tho' not in this World, which was more than Chriſt's own Diſciples did: Nay farther, he owns Chriſt upon the Croſs, and when in the loweſt degree of his ſtate of Humilia-

tion, even when all the *Jews* were mocking and perſecuting him; yea, when his own Diſciples forſook him, and St. *Peter*, one of the Chiefeſt, had deny'd him thrice: Nay farther yet, how wonderful was his Humility? He only deſires, that Chriſt would remember him in his Kingdom. He does not preſume to ask, that he might ſit on Chriſt's Right hand, or on his Left, in his Kingdom; but only, that he would *remember him.* A true penitent humble Soul will think the leaſt degree of Mercy great enough, or too great for him. I have the rather noted all this, becauſe too many encourage themſelves in their Wickedneſs by the Example of this poor Thief: They think they may live as they liſt, and yet be ſaved if they repent on a Sick-bed, and at the Hour of Death: But how rare is it, that God does give ſuch Preſumptuous ſinners ſo much Grace in the time of their Sickneſs? How ſeldom do they give ſuch ample demonſtrations of their Faith, Humility, and ſincere Repentance? Now, what Anſwer doth Chriſt return to this honeſt Thief? The Text will give you a fair account of this: *Then ſaid Jeſus*

Jesus unto him, Verily I say unto thee, to day shalt thou be with me in Paradise. In which Words we have a fair description of the happiness of pious Souls, after they are departed from this wretched Body. I shall consider the Words in the same order that they lye: And,

First, They assure us, That pious Souls are immediately admitted to the actual possession of Happiness, upon their departure from the Body: *To Day*, saith Christ.

Secondly, They do farther assure us of the greatness of this Happiness; they shall be with Christ, and they shall be in Paradise: *To day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.*

First, These Words assure us, that pious Souls are immediately admitted to the actual possession of Happiness, upon their departure from the Body. There are a sort of Men in the World they call *Psychoparruychites*, who hold, that *the Soul, after its departure from the Body, sleeps all the while till the General Resurrection, and consequently is neither in a state of Joy nor Misery till the Day of Judgment; when it shall be re-*

united to the Body, and ſent with it either to Heaven or Hell. But it is plain from the Text, that the Souls of Good men are immediately, after their departure from the Body, admitted to the actual poſſeſſion of Eternal happineſs: For Chriſt does here promiſe this honeſt Thief, that he ſhould be that *very day* with him in Paradiſe. Paradiſe is a place of Joy and Bliſs, and to be with Chriſt, is to be in a ſtate of Happineſs. Now in ſuch a place, and in ſuch a ſtate was the Thief to be that very day. So *Act.* 7. 56. St. *Stephen ſaw the Heavens open'd, and the Son of Man ſtanding on the Right hand of God:* He knew the Heavens were open'd for him, and that Chriſt ſtood there ready to receive him into Glory; and therefore he prays, *ver.* 59. *Lord Jeſus receive my Spirit.* So again, 2 *Cor.* 5. 8. *We are confident, I ſay, and willing rather to be abſent from the Body, and to be preſent with the Lord.* It ſeems the pious Soul, as ſoon as it is abſent from the Body, it is preſent with the Lord, and conſequently in a ſtate of Bliſs and Glory. Again, *Revel.* 14. 13. *I heard a Voice from Heaven, ſaying, Write, bleſſed are the dead which dye in the*

the Lord from henceforth, yea, ſaith the Spirit that they may reſt from their labours, and their works do follow them. Ye ſee here the Godly are ſaid to be bleſſed as ſoon as they dye; and not only to reſt, but alſo to receive the reward of their good Works. I ſhall add but one Text more, which you'l find, *Phil.* 1. 21, 22. *I am in a ſtrait betwixt two*, ſaith St. *Paul, having a deſire to depart and to be with Chriſt, which is far better. Nevertheleſs, to abide in the fleſh is more needful for you.* As much as if the Apoſtle ſhould have ſaid, I cannot tell whether I ſhould deſire, to live longer, or to dye ſooner, being preſt with Arguments on both ſides: If I conſult my ſelf and my own good, it is doubtleſs better for me to dye, and enter preſently into Happineſs: But then, if I conſult your Convenience, it were better I ſhould live longer in the World, to be ſerviceable unto your Edification. Now I think it is evident, that if the Apoſtle could have ſuppoſed, that his Soul ſhould have ſlept after death, and not preſently have enter'd into the fruition of Bliſs, there could have been no ſtrait in the caſe, nor any diſpute, but that it was better to

live ſtill in the World, to continue in the Comforts of a good Conſcience, and of doing good to others, rather than to be in a conſtant ſleep, or in a ſenſleſs ſtate of ſtupidity and inactivity. From all which Places of Scripture it is moſt plain, that the Souls of good Men do not ſleep, after their ſeparation from the Body, (as ſome among us fancy) but are immediately received into Bliſs, as *Lazarus* was into *Abrahams* Boſom, and the Thief here in the Text into Paradiſe.

Uſe. And we learn from hence the Reaſon, why the Primitive Chriſtians did celebrate their Funerals with Joy and Feaſting: We uſe to rejoyce at the Happineſs of our Friends in this World; and they much more, at their happineſs in a better. They did not therefore, as we do now, hang their Houſes and Churches with Mourning; but, as *Prudentius* tells us, with *White*, the Emblem of *Joy*: For they looked upon the day of their Deaths, as their Birth-day to an Eternal life; and their going out of this World, as an entrance upon the incomprehenſible Happineſs of a better. And indeed we ſhall find, they had Cauſe enough

enough to rejoyce, if we consider the greatness of the Happiness they were possess'd of; and this I told you was expresst in the Text by these two things:

1*st*, They shall be with Christ.

2*dly*, They shall be in Paradise.

1*st*, The Godly, after death, are said to be with Christ. Now, how great is the Happiness which lies couched in these Words? We cannot be with Christ, but we must be with all the Saints and Angels of Heaven: Nay farther, we must enjoy the sweet and ravishing Communion of all the Persons of the Ever Blessed Trinity: And sure such Company cannot but enhaunce the happiness of Heaven. Society is ordinarily styled *Sal vitæ*, the *Salt of Life*; without this the Life of Man would be most unsavoury and unpleasant. We know God said at the Creation of the World, *It is not good for Man to be alone.* It seems Paradise it self would have been a Valley of *Bacha*, little less than a Comfortless Solitude, without the refreshments of Society. That therefore nothing may be wanting to compleat the happiness of the Paradise above, St. *Paul*,

Heb.

Heb. 12. 22. gives us a large Catalogue of that Glorious Company we ſhall converſe with in Heaven; *We ſhall come*, ſaith he, *to the General Aſſembly of the Firſt born, to the Spirits of Juſt Men made Perfect, to an innumerable Company of Angels, and to God the Judge of all, and to Jeſus, the Mediator of the New Covenant.* From which place it is moſt plain, that we cannot be with Chriſt, but we muſt alſo be with God, with Angels, and with the Spirits of Juſt Men made Perfect. Now ſuch Glorious Company cannot but make the Happineſs of Paradiſe exceeding great, as will appear more at large by conſidering in particular what it is to be,

Firſt, With all the Saints of Heaven.

Secondly, What it is to be with the Angels. And,

Thirdly, What it is to be with God and Chriſt.

1*ſt.* Let us enquire what it is to be with all the Saints of Heaven, and how the happineſs of Paradiſe is inhaunced by ſuch Glorious Company. It is the unhappineſs of the Godly here below, that with *Daniel*, they are forced ſometimes

to

to dwell in the ſame Den with Lions, or elſe converſe, as St. *Paul* did at *Epheſus*, with Men that did more truly deſerve the name of Beaſts. How was righteous *Lot* vexed daily with the filthy Converſation of the *Sodomites*? How does *David* mourn, that he was forced to dwell in *Meſech*, and ſojourn in the Tents of *Kedar*? The good Man whilſt he lives in this World, has his Eyes daily bloodſhot with Murders; his Ears unhallowed with Oaths and Blaſphemies; his Noſtrils offended with the Drunkards Vomits; and his Memory made too often the Cabinet of vain frothy or obſcene Diſcourſes; ſo that with good *Lucullus* in *Tully*, he frequently deſires his Memory were worſe, or that he could learn the Art of Oblivion. But in Heaven the Godly ſhall be free from all ſuch vile and troubleſom Company: Here there will be no Murderers, no Whoremongers, no Drunkards, no Dogs to moleſt them, Rev. 22. 15. *In the Heavenly* Canaan *there will be no* Canaanites *to be pricks in their Eyes, and Thorns in their Sides: But they ſhall converſe for ever with all the Saints of Heaven, and live in the general Aſſembly*

bly of the First-born. Now what it is thus to live with all the Saints of Heaven, I shall shew you more distinctly in these following Particulars.

1*st.* The Godly shall know all the Blessed Saints that are in Heaven. It is a wonder it should be disputed by any Divines, whether the Saints in Glory shall know one another: But sure there can be little comfort in Society, where there is not a particular Knowledge and a familiar Acquaintance. St. *Austin* therefore tells us, *In Cælo a singulis omnes, ab omnibus singuli cognoscentur, In Heaven*, saith he, *all Men shall be known of every Man, and every Man shall be known of all Men.* It is reported of *Luther*, that being reasonable well the night before he died, he sate at Table with his Friends, and the matter of their Discourse hapned to be, *Whether they should know one another in Heaven? Whether the Father should know his Child, a Husband his Wife, and a Friend his Friend? Luther* resolv'd the point in the Affirmative, and gave this Reason, among others, for it; *Adam*, saith he, *knew* Eve *as soon as he saw her*; *and be sure our Knowledge in the Heavenly Paradise shall*

ſhall be much greater than his was in the Earthly Paradiſe; none will be ſtranggers there, but every Glorified Saint ſhall know all the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apoſtles, Martyrs, and all the Servants of God. We find, Mat. 17. 4. *Peter, James* and *John*, who were allowed to ſee Chriſts Transfiguration, knew *Moſes* and *Elias*, whom they had never ſeen before; how much more ſhall we, being fully illuminated, and perfectly Glorified in Heaven, know exactly all the bleſſed Ones, tho' never acquainted with them upon Earth? This therefore is one part of the Happineſs of the Godly in Heaven, they ſhall ſee *Abraham, Iſaac* and *Jacob*, in the Kingdom of God, as our Saviour ſpeaks, *Luke* 13. 28. They ſhall know all thoſe Worthies and Heroes that have gone to Heaven before, or ſhall come thither after them; but this is not all, For,

2*ly*, We ſhall not only know all God's Saints in Heaven, but we ſhall have more ſweet and raviſhing Communion with them. Here a *Nazianzin* ſhall repeat the embraces of his beloved *Baſil*, a *David* for ever enjoy his Deareſt *Jonathan*, and the Pious Soul poſſeſs what

So-

Socrates could of old but wiſh for; namely, the intimate converſes of all thoſe Brave Heroes who have gone thither before him. And you'l eaſily believe there ſhall be moſt ſweet Communion among the Saints in Heaven, when you have conſidered the important Phraſe, by which it is expreſt, Mat. 8. 11. *And I ſay unto you, that many ſhall come from the* East *and* Weſt, *and ſhall ſit down with* Abraham, *and* Iſaac, *and* Jacob, *in the Kingdom of Heaven.* In our Tranſlation it is *ſhall ſit down*, but in the Greek it is *ſhall lie down upon Beds*, as they uſed to do at their greateſt Feaſts. So that there ſhall be much ſweet and pleaſant Communion among the Saints in Heaven, as uſes to be among Friends at their moſt ſolemn Feaſts. Hence alſo we read, Luke 16. 22. *That* Lazarus *was carried by the Angels into* Abrahams *Boſom.* It was the manner of the *Jews*, when they feaſted, to lean in the Boſom one of another: Thus St. *John*, when he ſat to eat with Chriſt, is ſaid *to lean in his Boſom.* So here, *Lazarus* being laid in *Abrahams* Boſom, denotes they have a continual Feaſt of Joy in Heaven; they are conſtantly enter-

tertained with the Supper of the Lamb; and conſequently muſt needs have ſweet and raviſhing Society and Communion each with other. And how does this inhance the Happineſs of Paradiſe above? Ask your own experience, what ſweetneſs you have found in their Converſation here below? Did not King *David* account them the moſt excellent Perſons upon Earth, and delight exceedingly in the ſociety of God's Saints? And if ſo much delight be to be found, if ſo much Sweetneſs be to be taſted in the Society of the Saints here on Earth, How much more abundantly ſhall we be ſatisfied with their Company and Converſation in Heaven? Alas, here the very beſt of men have ſo many Imperfections, and are ſubject to ſo many Misfortunes, as do often make their Acquaintance troubleſome and unpleaſant to us. Hence it was good Advice which was given by *Ariſtotle*, namely, *that we ſhould not greatly multiply Friends, becauſe their frequent falling into Miſeries and Misfortunes, would imbitter our Lives, and make our Condition wretched and miſerable.* But in Heaven we are told to our Comfort, that we ſhall converſe with *the Spirits*

Spirits of just men made Perfect. The Saints in Heaven will have no infirmities, no imperfections to abate and allay the solaces of their Conversation: But on the other hand, they will have all those Excellencies and Advantages which are requisite to make their Company Sweet and Desirable; and how great must this Happiness needs be? When Christs Disciples, at the Transfiguration enjoyed the Company only of *Moses* and *Elias*, they were so well satisfied with it, that they cried out *bonum est nobis esse hic*, it is good for us to be here. How much greater will their Happiness be, who shall be with Christ in Paradise! For they cannot be with him, but they must be with all his Saints. As soon as this Penitent Thief entred the gates of Heaven, he was joyfully received with all the Honourable Companies and Troops above. There did the Patriarch meet him, the Prophets hug'd him, and the Martys struck up their Harps and bid him welcome to the Celestial Regions; such joy as this did enter his Soul, when he did enter into *the joy of his Master*. But,

2*ly*

pleaſant muſt the Knowledge be. Now there can be no Object ſo noble and excellent as Almighty God: He is Infinite in Perfections, and therefore to have a clear and perfect Knowledge of his Infinite and Divine Perfections, muſt needs make a conſiderable part of our future happineſs. Now it is plain from Scripture, that we ſhall have a clear and perfect knowledge of God in Heaven. Here it is, that, as the Prophet *Eſay* ſpeaks, we ſhall *ſee the King of Kings in all his beauty*, Eſay 33. 17. Indeed, the Soul here below, like the Spouſe in the *Canticles*, ſeeks her *Beloved* only in the dark, beholds his Backparts in the Glaſs of his *Creatures*, reads a little more of him in the *Holy Scripture*, and taſtes a litle more of him in his *Comfortable Ordinances*; yet ſtill ſhe ſees him but darkly, and through the Lattice, and all is able to do no more, than to make her *ſick of Love*: But hereafter we ſhall *ſee God face to face, and we ſhall know him, even as we are known*, 1 *Cor.* 13.12. We ſhall not then ſit down content with the Schoolmans Negative Knowledge, and be proud, when we know only what God

is not: No, we ſhall then have a Poſitive Knowledge of him, and as St. *John* phraſes it, *ſee him even as he is*, 1 Joh. 3. 2. What ſtrange Expreſſions are theſe! How clear and how full a Knowledge of God do they import! We ſhall no longer read of God in the Scripture, or hear of him by his Miniſters, but we ſhall ſee him with our Eyes, yea, and we ſhall ſee him as he is, in all that wonderful Glory, which is the Light and Sun of the higheſt Heavens. Now, how much ſuch clear Knowledge of God will increaſe our future happineſs, we may learn in ſome meaſure from the Story of the Queen of the South: The Q. of *Sheba* heard indeed ſome imperfect Reports of *Solomon*'s *Wiſdom* in her own Country; but when ſhe came and ſaw his Perſon, heard his incomparable Wiſdom, and had been an happy Spectator of all the Pomp and Royal Magnificence of his Court, ſhe was then ſweetly aſtoniſhed, ſo that *there was no more Spirit left in her*: Even ſo, when the pious Soul ſhall come to the Court of Heaven, and there ſee God, as he is cloathed with Majeſty and Honour, infinitely beyond and above all ſhe ever heard of him

him by his Miniſters, or read of him in the Scripture; when ſhe ſhall behold the Attendance of his Throne, even *ten thouſand times ten thouſand Angels* and comprehend all thoſe ineffable Glories, which neither Eye hath ſeen, nor Ear heard, with what pleaſing Ecſtaſies of Admiration will ſhe then be tranſported! But this is not all: For,

2*dly*, Our happineſs in Paradiſe will not barely conſiſt in the clear and perfect Knowledge of God; but alſo in the enjoyment of him unto all Eternity. Knowledge without Fruition, can only give us the Happineſs of *Moſes* upon Mount *Nebo*; at beſt, but a fairer proſpect of the Heavenly *Canaan*: but we are aſſured in Scripture, that we ſhall not only ſee this *Land of Promiſe*, but we ſhall taſte the *Milk* and the *Hony* of it: We ſhall not only ſee and know God, but we ſhall alſo enjoy him. This Enjoyment of God is elegantly ſet forth in Scripture by the Metaphor of a Feaſt, becauſe Friends uſually enjoy themſelves moſt, when they Feaſt together. Now what ſtrange Expreſſions to this purpoſe are thoſe which we read, *Rev.* 19. 9. where the Angel bids S. *John* write thus,

Bleſſed are they which are called to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. They uſed to have their greateſt Feaſts at Supper; but the happineſs of Heaven is here ſet forth, not only by the Metaphor of a *Supper*, but alſo of a *Marriage Supper*, to denote that more intimate and pleaſant enjoyment of God and Chriſt the Saints may expect in Heaven: And leſt we ſhould in the leaſt doubt of this, theſe Emphatical words are added, which perhaps ye do not uſe much to take notice of, but now I deſire you to do; *theſe*, ſaith the Angel, *are the true Sayings of God:* So that we may well believe, the Saints ſhall enjoy all this happineſs I have ſpoken of. Tho' this which I laſt mention'd, be a moſt comfortable Text, yet, I think, you'l find one fuller to this purpoſe, *Luk.* 12. 37. *Bleſſed are thoſe Servants, whom the Lord when he cometh ſhall find watching: Verily I ſay unto you, that he ſhall gird himſelf, and make them ſit down to meat, and will come forth and ſerve them.* Here again the happpineſs of Heaven is ſet forth by the Metaphor of a *Feaſt*; and our Saviour alludes to thoſe Feaſts among the *Romans*, which they called

called their *Saturnalia*; when the Maſters were obliged to provide ſumptuous Feaſts for their Servants, and to gird themſelves and come forth and ſerve. It ſeems God will deal thus with his poor unworthy Servants: He will prepare as great a Feaſt for them, as Heaven can afford, and will come forth himſelf and ſerve them. In this World he makes uſe of Angels, as *Miniſtring Spirits*, and imploys them for the good of his People: But in the other World, the happineſs of the Godly will be ſo great, and ſo infinite, that Angels being but finite Creatures, cannot ſerve any longer as Conduits, to convey it to them: No, God himſelf, as he will be the Feaſt, ſo he will be the Entertainer, too, and in a word, *All in all.* Thus I have ſhewn you, how great our happineſs will be in reſpect of God himſelf; we ſhall have a clear and perfect knowledge of him and his infinite Excellencies, and we ſhall alſo have a full Enjoyment of him unto all Eternity. I proceed now to the laſt thing propoſed, namely, to conſider the greatneſs of this happineſs, with reference to the place.

Laſtly, We ſhall not only be with Chriſt, but we ſhall be with Chriſt in Paradiſe. To be with Chriſt in any place, cannot but be happineſs: Had our Saviour took the Penitent Thief along with him, when he deſcended into Hell, there to have ſeen him Triumph over *Principalities and Powers*, and all our ſpiritual Enemies, this had been a bleſſed and moſt pleaſant ſight: But to carry him along with himſelf to Paradiſe, the pleaſantneſs and glories of the place could not but add to the happineſs of it. To this end you'l find the Holy Ghoſt in Scripture exceeding large in the deſcription of this place, and it is ſet forth by ſuch Metaphors as denote the moſt incomprehenſible, both beauty, pleaſantneſs, ſtrength, ſplendour, and glory: for pleaſure, it is in the Text called *Paradiſe*; for Magnificence, a *Kingdom*, yea, a *Kingdom of Glory* too: It is ſtyled, *an Houſe not made with hands*, but by God himſelf, to denote both its ſtrength and workmanſhip: For Magnitude, it is called a *Great City*: For Purity, the *Holy* and *Heavenly Jeruſalem*. Would we ſome Evening take a walk with *Iſaac* into the Fields, and there

there view how God has garniſhed theſe upper *Regions* of the World, how many are thoſe Stars which ſparkle there? And they are alſo, moſt of them, of ſuch an incredible Magnitude, as to be more than an hundred times bigger than the Earth; and yet this Firmament, as glorious as it is, is only the outſide of the Pavement of that *Jeruſalem* which is above. What incomprehenſible Glory then muſt ſhine within it! We read in the Book of *Revelations*, that the very *Streets are of pure Gold*, the *Walls and Foundations all of Precious Stones*: Such incredible luſtre and glory is in it, that the *Sun* ſhall not need to give his Light, nor the Moon to ſhine in it; *for the Glory of God ſhall inlighten it, and the Lamb ſhall be the light thereof for ever.* Thus happy ſhall the Godly be after they depart this Life, they ſhall be with Chriſt, and which is more, they ſhall be with Chriſt in Paradiſe. I come now to draw ſome practical Inferences from what has been delivered.

Application.

1*ſt*. Has the Holy Ghoſt in Scripture made ſuch diſcoveries of Paradiſe, and our

our future happineſs; then certainly they ought to fill our Souls with earneſt Longings, and vehement Purſuits after them. When King *Hezekiah* had ſhewn to the Ambaſſador of *Baladan*, King of *Babylon*, the Houſe of his Precious things, his *Silver* and his *Gold*, and *all his Treaſures*; we read theſe finite periſhing Treaſures, proved Load-ſtones powerful enough to draw theſe *Babylonians* to War againſt *Judah*: How much more ought the infinite *Glories of Heaven*, which God has revealed in the Scripture, raiſe ſuch violent Deſires in us, as may make us reſemble the Spouſe in the *Canticles*, who is compared to a *Pillar of Smoak*, mounting continually towards Heaven; or them who lived in the dayes of *John the Baptiſt*, who are ſaid to have *taken the Kingdom of Heaven by violence*. Such a temper of Spirit as this we find in the Saints of God: *My Soul fainteth for thy Salvation: I have longed for it*, ſaith Holy *David Pſal.* 119.81. It is a remarkable Paſſage of *Cornelius a Lapide*, upon *Gen.* 47. where enquiring why the Patriarchs of old were ſo paſſionately deſirous to have their bones buried in the Land of

of *Canaan*, he gives this Reaſon: *God*, ſaith he, *had revealed unto theſe Holy men the Day of Chriſt; they all, as well as* Abraham, *ſaw Chriſts Day and rejoyced: Not only the Day of his Nativity, but that more glorious Day of his Reſurrection; In which not only Chriſt himſelf ſhould riſe, but others that ſlept ſhould riſe with him, and attend upon him into Heaven at his Aſcenſion. Theſe hopes of Riſing with Chriſt, and getting ſooner to Heaven, both in their Bodies and Souls, than others, made them thus careful and ſolicitous to be buried near the place where Chriſt was to riſe.* How unlike theſe Holy Patriarchs are many amongſt us, whoſe heavy Souls move down to Earth, as to their Center: Neither God nor Heaven does ever ſo much trouble their Thoughts, as to make them breath forth their deſires after them. But ſuch as are true Believers, and ſincere Chriſtians, are in Scripture deſcribed by this known Periphraſis, of being ſuch as *love the appearing of Chriſt*; ſuch as deſire *to be diſſolved*, that they may be with him; ſuch as earneſtly groan *to be cloathed upon with their Houſe which is from Heaven*,

Heaven, and therefore pray often with the Bride in the *Revelations*, *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.*

2*dly*, If we do earneſtly and ſeriouſly deſire this exceeding great happineſs of Paradiſe, we muſt be willing to uſe the Means which will bring us to it. It is a known Maxim in the Schools, *Qui vult finem, vult media ad finem: He that effectually deſires the End, deſires alſo the Means which lead unto that End.* If, with the Thief upon the Croſs, we expect after Death to enjoy Chriſt in Paradiſe, we muſt labour to imitate him, and give ſuch demonſtrations of our Humility, Faith in Chriſt, and ſincere Repentance as he did. Our Saviour tells us, that the *wiſe Merchant* in the Goſpel had no ſooner found a *Pearl of great Price*, but he preſently ſold all he had and purchas'd it. It is reported of *Camillus*, that Famous French Commander, that when he had taſted ſome of the pleaſant Grapes of *Italy*, he could never be at reſt, till he had raiſed a great Army, and Conquer'd that pleaſant Country. God has been pleaſed in Scripture, to preſent us with ſome of the Grapes of *Canaan*, to give us ſome taſte

taſte of the Heavenly gift, and the Powers of the World to come: How ſhould this make us reſtleſs and unquiet, till we arrive at this happy Country? Should we not now raiſe all the Forces that we can to fight our Spiritual Enemies, and conquer thoſe Luſts which oppoſe our happineſs? Should we now ſpare any Sin, tho' it were as dear to us as a beloved *Jonathan*? Sure, Heaven will recompence the loſs of a right Eye, and a right Hand, ſhould we pluck them off and ſacrifice them to our Saviour. And indeed we muſt thus forſake ſin, every ſin, the moſt darling ſin, if ever we hope to get to Paradiſe. The *Young man* in the Goſpel lacked but one thing, and yet fell ſhort of Heaven: And if thou wilt ſtill indulge thy ſelf in thy Covetouſneſs, Uncleanneſs, Swearing, Drunkenneſs, or any other known ſin, thou canſt never expect to be with Chriſt in Paradiſe. For Chriſt has told us plainly, *Mat.* 19. 17. that if we will enter into Life, we muſt keep the Commandments.

Which that we may all do, God of his Infinite Mercy grant, &c.

SER-

SERMON X.

Matt. xxiv. 30.

And then ſhall appear the ſign of the Son of Man in Heaven: and then ſhall all the Tribes of the Earth mourn, and they ſhall ſee the Son of Man coming in the Clouds of Heaven, with Power and great Glory.

THE Office of our Bleſſed Saviours Mediatorſhip conſiſts chiefly in three Parts, his Satisfaction, Interceſſion, and Judging the World at the Laſt Day. The Firſt of theſe he performed here on Earth; the Second

cond he is ſtill performing in Heaven; and the Third he will perform in the Air, *When he ſhall come in the Clouds of Heaven, with Power and great Glory.* We know he ſatisfied infinite Juſtice, when he offered up himſelf a propitiatory Sacrifice on the Croſs; and he is ſtill interceeding in Heaven at the Right Hand of God. As he purchaſed Salvation for ſinners by dying for them, ſo he interceeds that this Salvation may be applied unto ſuch as repent ſincerely of their ſins and believe on his Name. The third part of his Mediatorſhip is ſtill to be performed; for he is not, as Mediator, to judge the World, till the time appointed by his Father; and then he will for certain Judge both the Quick and the Dead. Indeed *the Father himſelf Judgeth no Man, but hath committed all Judgment unto the Son*, as our Saviour ſpeaks, *John* 5. 22. and he gives the reaſon of it *verſ.* 27. *becauſe he is the Son of Man.* As he became the Son of Man, that he might be in a capacity to ſave the Penitent: So God has appointed the ſame Son of Man to judge the World, that he may be able to puniſh the Impenitent: Such as before would

not

not accept him for a Saviour, will now be forced to admit him as a Judge. Hence we are told, Act. 17. 31. *That God has appointed a Day, in which he will Judge the World in Righteouſneſs, by that Man whom he hath Ordained, and whereof he hath given us aſſurance, in that he hath raiſed him from the Dead.* Tho' we are not certain when the day of Judgment will come, that we may be alwayes preparing for it; yet you ſee it is certain that there will be ſuch a day, and that Chriſt, our Mediator, is ordained Judge: A happy day for all that are truly pious; they need not fear this Judge, who is no other than their Merciful Saviour. But it will be a day of darkneſs and gloomineſs unto the Wicked; theſe will then mourn, *when they ſhall ſee this Son of Man coming with great Power and Glory*; ſo much we are told in the Text, *Then ſhall appear the ſign of the Son of Man in Heaven, and then ſhall all the Tribes of the Earth Mourn; and they ſhall ſee the Son of Man coming in the Clouds of Heaven with Power and great Glory.* For the better underſtanding of theſe words, we will enquire.

Firſt,

First, Why Christ is called the Son of Man.

Secondly, What is here meant by the Sign of the Son of Man.

Thirdly, That this Son of Man will come to Judge the World.

Fourthly, That he will come with great Power and Glory.

Fifthly, That all the wicked of the Earth will then have just cause to Mourn.

First, Let us briefly enquire why Christ is called the Son of Man. Some learned Men observe, that he is called so in the Scriptures more than forty times; and there are two reasons of the Name.

1*st*. He is called the Son of Man, in token of his Humanity. Christ our Blessed Mediator, was both God and Man; and therefore as he is often called the Son of God, to denote his Divinity; so he is as often called the Son of Man, to denote his Humanity.

2*ly*. He is called the Son of Man, to denote that state of Humiliation, to which he condescended for our sakes. It was usual for the Jews to style Princes and Potentates בְּנֵי אִישׁ Sons of strong

ſtrong Men; but ſuch as were poor they ſtyl'd *Beni Adam*, Sons of Men. Chriſt therefore aſpired to no higher title than that of Son of Man: He was pleaſed to humble himſelf for us. He, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *became poor, that we might become rich.* Born he was of the pooreſt Parents, ſuch as neither had an Houſe of their own to lay him in when he was born, nor able to procure any place beſides a Stable for his reception into this World. And as he was born in this poor condition; ſo tho' *the Birds of the Air have Neſts*, as he ſpeaks, yet whilſt he lived, *he had not*, of his own, *where to lay his Head.* Nay, further yet, when he came to die, we know he was beholding to the Charity of *Joſeph* of *Arimathea* for a room in his Sepulchre. No wonder then if Chriſt be ambitious of no more Honourable Title than this *of Son of Man*, ſince he made himſelf ſo vile, ſo mean, ſo contemptible for our ſakes. Thus I have briefly ſhewn why Chriſt is called ſo often the Son of Man; it denotes the truth of his Humanity, as alſo that ſtate of Humiliation, to which he condeſcended for our ſakes.

I come now in the ſecond place to enquire.

Secondly, What is here meant by the ſign of the Son of Man. It would ſpend too much of our time to mention all thoſe conjectures, which learned Men have made concerning this Sign, ſince it is a matter we may be ſafely ignorant of. I ſhall only ſet down two of the beſt interpretations I have met with.

1*ſt*. Very many learned Men, both Antient and Modern, do by the Sign of the Son of Man, underſtand the Croſs. St. *Jerom*, St. *Chryſoſtom*, and Venerable *Bede*, upon this place, affirm this Sign to be no other than that of the Croſs. The *Ethiopian* Church is ſo peremptory in this matter, that it is put into the Articles of their Creed, as the Learned *Gregory* informs us. There is hardly any thing the Antient Fathers are more unanimous in than this: And to ſay the truth, there is ſome tolerable Reaſon for this Antient Opinion. For what can be more Honourable to our Lord and Saviour, or more full of Terror to his Enemies, than that the Croſs of Chriſt, which they counted fooliſhneſs; and more than ſo, eſteemed the greateſt re-

proach of the Christian Faith, should at that day be made the Herald to Proclaim his Coming, and call all Nations of the World to appear before him? But tho' this interpretation be backt both with Reason and great Authorities; Yet,

2*ly.* There is another interpretation that seems as plausible, if not more plausible than it: For the learned *Vossius*, *Mede*, *Twisse*, *Millet*, and several others, do understand by the Sign of the Son of Man, who is a Sign. This kind of Dialect, this manner of Speaking is frequent in the Scripture; thus the Law of Faith is all one with Faith that is a Law, the Law of Sin, that is, Sin it self, which dwelling in unregenerate Persons, reigns as it were by Law. So the Sign of the Son of Man, that is, the Son of Man, who is a Sign. And that which gives the greatest Authority to this Opinion, is that St. *Luke*, in the parallel place, interprets it so, *Chap.* 21. 27. where the word Sign is left out, and the Verse runs thus, *Then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a Cloud, with Power and great Glory.* And St. *Mark* renders the words the same way, *Chap.* 13.

13. 26. If therefore St. *Mark* and St. *Luke* may be allowed to be as good interpreters of St. *Matthew* as any other, by the Sign of the Son of Man, we may underſtand the Son of Man himſelf, whoſe Glorious appearance in the Clouds will be a certain infallible ſign that the day of Judgment is come. Thus I have ſhewn you what Conjectures learned Men have made concerning this Sign of the Son of Man: Some underſtand the Croſs, others Chriſt himſelf, whoſe Glorious appearance will be a certain ſign of the approaching Judgment. I come now in the third place to ſhew you,

Thirdly, That this Son of Man will come to judge the World. None but that God who made us, has any right to judge us. As we have received all things from him; ſo as Stewards, muſt we render an account of all things to him. Indeed this Judgment belongs originally to the whole Trinity; but the outward adminiſtration of it ſhall be committed to the Son of Man. So we are told expreſly in the Text, *Then ſhall ye ſee the Son of Man coming in the Clouds of Heaven*. Thus you ſee the Judgment of the laſt Day is committed to the

Son of Man; and indeed it is committed to him, *becauſe he is the Son of Man*; our Saviour tells us ſo expreſly, John 5.26, 27. *As the Father has life in himſelf, ſo hath he given unto the Son to have life in himſelf, and has given him Authority to execute Judgment alſo, becauſe he is the Son of Man.* Ye ſee the Son of Man will come as Judge at the laſt Day, and he comes, becauſe he is the Son of Man. It will not be amiſs to enquire briefly into the Reaſons of it.

1*ſt*. God has committed the Judgment of the laſt Day to the *Son of Man*, becauſe he has appointed it ſhould be Viſible. This is fairly hinted in the Text, where it is ſaid, they *ſhall ſee the Son of Man coming in the Clouds of Heaven.* God himſelf is a Spirit, and conſequently inviſible; but the *Son of Man* is Viſible, and therefore he is appointed to Ride the Circuit, that he may be ſeen of all his Enemies: And that we might take the more notice of this Reaſon, it is repeated again, *Chap.* 26.64. where Chriſt tells his Enemies, that *hereafter they ſhall ſee the Son of Man ſitting on the Right hand of Power, and coming*

coming in the Clouds of Heaven. It seems the *Son of Man* shall come, and his Enemies shall see him, and be confounded at the sight of him. This may be farther confirm'd from *Act.* 1. 11. where you'l find the Angels preaching this Doctrin; *This same Jesus who is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into Heaven.* The Comparison is here made between our Saviour's Ascending into Heaven, and his returning again to Judgment: *Ascendit visibiliter, & descendit visibiliter*: *He Ascended,* saith *Gerhard, in a visible manner, and he shall descend to Judgment in a visible manner too.*

2*ly.* God has committed the Judgment of the last Day to the *Son of Man,* for the reward of his Obedience, and greater exaltation of his Human Nature. It is but Justice in God to make this *Son of Man* Judge the World, seeing he came into the World, and was judged by it. It is but equal to invest Christ with a power of Absolution and Condemnation; seeing he was Condemned by us to dye, and dyed that he might be in a capacity to Absolve us. It is but

reaſonable that all the Sons of Men ſhould bow before his Throne, and ſubmit to his Judgment, who disdain'd not for our ſakes, to ſtand before the Tribunal of wicked Men, and receive the Sentence of Condemnation. To this purpoſe are thoſe Expreſſions of St. *Paul*, Phil. 2. 8, 9. *Being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto the Death, even the death of the Croſs: Wherefore God alſo has highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name, that at the Name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow.* He that came at firſt to ſave us, muſt it ſeems come at laſt to Judge us: And, it is but juſt, that he who before carried a Reed in his hand, and was derided by his Enemies, ſhould hereafter ſway a Scepter of Righteouſneſs, and break his Enemies in peices with a Rod of Iron. But,

3*ly*, God has committed the Judgment of the laſt Day to the Son of Man for the greater Comfort and Conſolation of the Godly. What a joyful ſight will it be unto all ſincere Penitents, when they ſhall ſee the Advocate become their Judge, and none but their Saviour ſiting

ting on the Throne of Glory? For he knows all the Frailties and Infirmities of our Natures: *He knoweth our frame, and remembreth that we are but Dust:* Yea, he will be yet more ready to pity us, seeing he was pleased to assume our Natures, bear our Infirmities, and to be tempted in all things like as we are. Well then may the Godly be said in Scripture, to long for this *glorious appearance of the Lord Jesus.* Well may the Bride in the *Revelations* cry, *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly*; seeing this Day of Judgment will be to her, no other than the Day of Nuptuals: A Day in which Christ will be married to his People, and admit them unto the neareſt Union and Communion with himself, and that unto all Eternity.

4*thly*, God has committed the Judgment of the last Day to the Son of Man, for the greater Terror and Confusion of the Wicked. The Angels, who were present at our Saviours Ascention, tell his Disciples, *Act.* 1. 11. that *the same Jesus who then ascended into Heaven, should descend in like manner as he then ascended up into Haeven.* Now, we know our Saviour, when he ascended

into Heaven, carried along with him the print of the Spear, and all thoſe Scars that were made by the Nails and Thorns: And theſe it ſeems he will bring along with him, when he returns to Judgment. How then will the *wicked mourn*, as we are told in the Text, *when they look upon him whom they had formerly pierced*! Thoſe Wounds which were at firſt opened to heal their Souls, will now open their Mouths and call for Vengeance on them. Chriſt's *Eyes*, ſaith St. *John*, will now become *flames of Fire*, and ſuch as will certainly conſume them; his *Feet* like *fine Braſs* burning in a Furnace, and cannot but deſtroy them. Well may the wicked call then upon the *Rocks to cover*, and *the Mountains to hide them*; ſince the *preſence of the Lamb* will be infinitely more dreadful, than the preſence of the fierceſt Lion. For unto ſuch as have trampled this Son of God and Man under foot; unto ſuch as have counted *the Blood of the Covenant an unholy thing*; unto ſuch, I ſay, there will now remain nothing, but a *certain fearful looking for of Judgment and fiery Indignation*, which ſhall devour theſe Adverſaries. Thus I have diſpatch'd the

the Third General, and ſhewn you, that this *Son of Man* muſt come at the laſt Day to judge the World, and the Reaſon of it. I come now,

Fourthly, In the Fourth place to ſhew you, that *He will come with great Power and Glory.* This is plainly deliver'd in the Text, *Then ſhall they ſee the Son of Man coming in the Clouds of Heaven with Power and great Glory.* And,

1*ſt*, He will come with *great Glory.* And,

2*dly*, He ſhall come with *Power.*

1*ſt*, Let us conſider the greatneſs of that Glory with which this *Son of Man* ſhall come to Judge the World. Tho' his firſt coming into the World was mean and contemptible, clouded with Poverty and Grief, and ſuch other humble Circumſtances as were proper for his ſtate of Humiliation; yet his ſecond Coming will be ſplendid and glorious, as will appear from theſe following Particulars:

1*ſt*, Let us conſider the immediate Fore-runners and Harbingers of our Saviour's Second coming. Kings and Princes have their Harbingers, and ſo has this King of Kings too. St. *Jerome* tells us of

of an Antient Tradition of the *Jewiſh* Doctors, namely, that for fifteen Days together, before the great Day of Judgment, there ſhall be tranſacted upon the Stage of Nature, a continued ſcene of fearful Signs and Wonders. *The Sea ſhall lift up his mountainous billows, and make a fearful noiſe with its rouling Waves: The Heaven ſhall crack night and day with loud and roaring Thunders: The Earth ſhall groan under hidious Convulſions, and quotidian Earthquakes: The Air ſhall blaze with portentous Comets: The Moon ſhall ſhed forth purple ſtreams of diſcolour'd Light: The Sun ſhall ſhroud himſelf in perpetual Darkneſs; and the reſt of the Stars ſhall ſuffer themſelves to be hid in diſmal Obſcurity. Thus the whole frame of Nature ſhall be hung with Mourning, a little before the approach of the Day of Judgment.* Nor is this only a Tradition of the *Jews*; but it is alſo the Prediction of our Saviour, who tells us in the Verſe foregoing the Text, that *in thoſe days the Sun ſhall be darkened, and the Moon ſhall not give her light; and the Stars ſhall fall from Heaven,* &c. *and then ſhall appear the ſign of the Son of Man.* Such Harbingers, ſuch Fore-

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runners as these, do abundantly declare the glorious coming of our Saviour to Judgment. But,

2*dly* His glorious coming to Judgment will yet farther appear, if we consider the transcendant lustre of his own Person. How beautiful, how glorious is our blessed Saviour, whilst he now sits at the right Hand of God? He is now cloathed with *Light*, as with a Garment; and his Human Nature does far surpass the globe of the Sun for lustre. What an astonishing description of his Glory is given, *Rev.* 1. 13, *&c. In the midst of the seven Candlesticks was one like the Son of Man: His Head was white as Wool, and his locks were white as the Snow: His Eyes were as a flame of Fire, and his Countenance was as the Sun shining in his strength.* Thus glorious is Christ in his own Person: Wherever he goes he carries Day along with him, and therefore when at the Last Day he shall descend from the right Hand of his Father, to that part of the Air where he will fix his Throne, he will appear like a large walking Star, sparkling with beams of Majesty, and dazling Glory. And this is called in Scripture Christ's

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own glory, *Luke* 9. 26. *When the Son of Man ſhall come in his own Glory.* But,

3*dly*, This glory of Chriſts own Perſon will receive additional luſtre from the glory of his Attendants. This Son of Man, when he comes to judge the World, he will not come alone, but he will come attended with Myriads of Saints and Angels. St. *Jude* has Recorded an antient Prophecy of *Enoch*'s to this purpoſe, *ver.* 14,15. *Behold*, ſaith he, *the Lord cometh with ten thouſand of his Saints, to execute Judgment upon all and to convince all that are ungodly, of all their ungodly deeds.* Now how will the attendance of ſo many glorious Saints add to the luſtre of this great Day? We are told in Scripture, that *the Juſt ſhall ſhine with the brightneſs of the Sun.* What an amazing ſpectacle then will it be, to ſee this Son of Man deſcend from his Imperial Seat, far above all Heavens, and coming in the Clouds with a glorious Train of ſhining Saints, all following him with Crowns of Glory on their Heads, and the moſt raviſhing *Hallelujahs* in their Mouths. But he will not be attended only with innumerable

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of his Saints; but Myriads of Angels will alſo augment his Train. Hence in *Luke* 9. 26. it is ſaid, that he ſhall come in his own glory, and in his Fathers, and of his holy Angels. All the Angels of Heaven will deck themſelves with all their Ornaments of Light, and wait upon our Saviour, when he comes to triumph over his Enemies. We know theſe glorious Beings attended on him at his Birth, and when he was but in a ſtate of Humiliation; and therefore we need not queſtion, but they will add to the pomps and triumphs of his glorious Day. Well then may our Saviour be ſaid in the Text *to come with glory* when he ſhall come attended with all the Hoſt of Heaven, with an inumerable Retinue of glorious Saints and Angels. But this is not all: For,

4*thly*, The great Glory of Chriſt's coming to Judgment will yet farther apear, if we conſider the glory of his Throne: According to the tranſcendant Majeſty of his Perſon, ſo ſhall his Throne be, even a *Throne of Glory*: Hence is that of St. *Matth.* Chap. 25. 31. *When the Son of Man ſhall come in his glory, and all the Holy Angels with him, then*

then ſhall he ſit upon the Throne of his Glory. Now what this *Throne of Glory* will be, is fairly hinted in the Text, where it is ſaid, that *the Son of Man will come at the laſt Day in the Clouds of Heaven.* Chriſt will ſit on a bright radiant Cloud, when he keeps the General Aſſizes of the laſt Day. This may farther be gathered from the Teſtimony of the Angels, *Act.* 1. 11. where they tell his Diſciples at his Aſcention, that *the ſame Jeſus who was then taken up into Heaven, will ſo come in like manner, as they ſaw him then go up into Heaven.* Now if you will know how he aſcended into Heaven, the *9th verſe* will inform you, where it is ſaid, that *He was taken up, and a Cloud received him out of their ſight.* Now as he rode up to Heaven on a radiant Cloud, ſo will he in like manner come riding down from thence. No wonder then if we read often in the *Revelations*, of *Thunderings and Lightnings coming out of the Throne of Chriſt:* For theſe roaring Meteors are ordinarily diſcharg'd from ſome terrible Cloud. Chriſt therefore will ſit on a bright ſhining Cloud, when he ſhall judge the World: And indeed this is

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the general Opinion of the *Jews*, as Learned Men obſerve: For this is a Common ſaying among them, as *Raimundus* reports, *If ever the Jews deſerve that the Meſſias ſhould come, he ſhall come glorioufly*, according to the Prophet *Daniel*, i. e. *in the Clouds of Heaven.* Now how will ſuch a bright ſhining Throne, hanging in the Air, add to the luſtre of of our Saviours appearing; For the Heathens, when they would deſcribe the glorious Majeſty of their Deities, were wont to bring them wrapt up in ſome bright and radiant Cloud. Thus *Homer* repreſents one of the Gods coming to *Diomedes*: —— νεφέλη εἰλύμμενος ὦμους *With his Shoulders wrapt up in a Cloud*: And ſo *Virgil* repreſents *Jupiter* coming to aſſiſt *Æneas* in a *bright ſhining Cloud.* Thus both *Jews* and *Gentiles* looked upon a *bright Cloud*, as a glorious ſign and Character of a Divine Majeſty. Thus I have ſhewn you with what Glory and Majeſty the Son of Man will appear at the laſt Day: His appearing will be uſher'd in with dreadful Harbingers and Fore-runners; he will deſcend with all the glory and luſtre of his own perſon. He will come attended with a glorious Retinue

Retinue of ſhining Saints and Angels; and he will ſit upon a Throne of Glory, namely, a bright and radiant Cloud. All this will be ſufficient to ſhew you, that the *Son of Man at the laſt Day will come in the Clouds with great Glory.* before I proceed farther, I ſhall crave leave to draw one or two Inferences from what has been already delivered. And,

Firſt, We may learn from hence, the place which is appointed for the Judgment of the laſt Day. This place it ſeems will be the Air; for ye hear our Saviour is to have a *bright ſhining Cloud* for his Throne; and is ſaid accordingly in the Text, to *Come in the Clouds of Heaven.* To the ſame purpoſe is what we read, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 17. where we are told, that *the Righteous ſhall be caught up in the Clouds, and meet the Lord in the Air*: And indeed the Air is a moſt proper place for our Saviour to keep his great Aſſizes: For being here advanced ſome diſtance above the Earth, he will more eaſily be ſeen by all the Inhabitants of it. Nay farther yet, this is now the Seat of the Devils Empire. Satan we know is called *the Prince of the*

the Air; and the Infernal Fiends are ſtyled *Spiritual Wickedneſſes in high places*. Here therefore will the Son of Man fix his Judgment Seat; here he will place his Throne: That all the World may know, that he has now ſpoiled Principalities and Powers, and got a compleat and perfect Victory over theſe his malicious Enemies. Then is the time when he will trample Satan under his Feet, and put a full Period to that Tyranny which he has exerciſed ſo long over the Sons of Men.

Secondly, We may infer from hence, what deep Impreſſions ſuch Doctrins as theſe ought to make upon us. The News of our Saviours coming to Judgment with all this Glory, ſhould cauſe us to take the greateſt Care imaginable, to fit and prepare our ſelves to meet him at this great Day. We have a remarkable Inſtance to this purpoſe in Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, which is atteſted by many and great Authors. It ſeems about Four hundred years after our Saviours Aſcenſion, one *Gregentius*, a Biſhop, endeavour'd the Converſion of thoſe *Jews* which liv'd in *Arabia Felix*; after a tedious Diſputation of three days con-

tinuance, ſome of the *Jews* deſired the Biſhop to ſhew them Jeſus alive, and it would convince them: Immediately upon this the Earth began to tremble, and the Sky to ſhine and eccho with Lightnings and Thunder: After theſe ceaſed, the Gates of the Celeſtial Palace open'd, and a bright ſerene Cloud appear'd, darting forth Beams of an extraordinary luſtre: At laſt our Bleſſed Saviour ſhewed himſelf, walking on this bright Cloud; and a Voice was heard from this Excellent Glory, ſaying, *I am he who was Crucified by your Fathers.* This glorious Appearance caſt all the *Jews* proſtrate on the ground, and beating their Breaſts, they cried with a loud Voice, *Lord, have mercy on us*; and afterwards were Baptized into the Faith of Chriſt. A like account we have of the Converſion of St. *Paul*, Act. 9. 3, *&c.* where we read, that as he journied towards *Damaſcus*, breathing forth nothing but Rage and Malice againſt Chriſtians, ſuddenly there ſhined round about him a Light from Heaven; and he heard a Voice ſaying unto him, *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* Upon which he trembling and aſtoniſhed ſaid, *Lord, what*

what wilt thou have me to do? Such effects as these are the Natural Attendants of such great and glorious Appearances as these: And ought they not to have the same influence upon us? What tho' they are not made to the Eye of our Sense, yet in Scripture they are made to the Eye of our Faith. If we are sincere Christians, and do heartily believe the Gospel, we have no more reason to doubt of this Coming of our Saviour *with great power and glory*, than if we were actual Spectators of it. Let us therefore bethink our selves, *what manner of persons we ought to be in all holy and godly Conversation.* If we were certain this great Day were near at hand, I am confident we would walk more circumspectly, *not as fools, but as wise.* We would then soon be perswaded to break off our League with Sin, and endeavour, by a sincere and speedy Repentance, to make a firm Peace with our God and Saviour. I shall not pretend to tell you the precise time of this Day of Judgment; but this I can assure you, that several Learned and Pious Divines, who have lately enquired into the Scripture Prophesies with great accuracy and

diligence, do tell us, that this great Day is even at the door, and that we may expect this glorious Appearance of the *Son of Man* in a very short time. But tho' they should be mistaken in their Conjectures, yet this is most certain that it will come at last, and that the time of our Life, which is all the time we have to prepare for it, is exceeding short. Let us therefore beseech Almighty God, that we all may be found such wise and faithful Servants, as are described, *v.* 46. then shall we with joy meet our Saviour in the Air, and make a part of his glorious Train, when he returns to the highest Heaven; giving, as is most due, all *Honour and Glory unto him that sitteth on the Throne, and unto the Lamb for evermore.*

Let us therefore beseech Almighty God, to give us Grace so to redeem our time, that we may be found in the number of his wise and faithful Servants; then shall we at the Day of Judgment meet our Saviour in the Air, and return with him to the Highest Heavens, singing Praises and Hallelujahs unto him that sits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for evermore. Amen, Amen.

SERMON

SERMON XI.

Prov. xvi. 9.

A mans heart deviſeth his way: but the Lord directeth his ſteps.

WHat great Eſteem and Veneration the Ancient World entertain'd of Proverbs, may eaſily be learned from the Writings of *Ariſtotle:* He tells in his Rhetorick, that they always allowed them the next place to Oracles: And in

other parts of his Writings, he gives them the noble Epithet of ἐξηκοντάλεμματα, as if they were the very Extract and Quinteſſence of Refined Wiſdom. The Divine *Solomon* ſets them yet higher, and thinks them worthy to be placed in the very Throne; for *Prov.* 86. he ſtyles them נְגִידִים, which tho' our Tranſlation renders only *Excellent words*, *Gejerus*, and other Learned Criticks tranſlate them more agreeably to the Hebrew, *Princes of Words:* Intimating thus much to us, That theſe Divine Sentences, which are called *Proverbs*, excel as much other Schemes of Speech, as Kings and Princes do their ordinary Subjects. But tho' Proverbs in the general have ſo much of Majeſty in them, and have always challenged a particular veneration from the Sons of Men: Yet the *Proverbs* of Holy Writ are farther commended to us from the very Inſcription and Title Page of the Book. It is a known Obſervation of Learned Men, that neither the Books of *Moſes*, *Joſhua*, nor other Pen-men of Sacred Writ, are recommended to the World by the Name of the Author, till we come to this Book of *Proverbs*; as if

if the Holy Ghoſt had deſigned ſome extraordinary advantage to this Heavenly Book, when in the very Front of it was prefix'd the moſt Auguſt Name of *Solomon Son of David, King of Iſrael*; and we may be ſure the Queen of the South will riſe up in Judgment againſt us at the laſt Day, if we do not give our beſt Attention to theſe Excellent Words of *Solomon*; that *Solomon*, who was once a Famous and Renowned King of *Iſrael*, and who, beſides thoſe Advantages of Education which he received from the pious Care of his Father King *David*, was alſo inſpired with Wiſdom from on high, and endued with ſuch Underſtanding and Largeneſs of Heart, as was commenſurate to the Sand of the boundleſs Ocean. Beſides what has hitherto been ſaid concerning the excellency of Proverbs in general, and theſe of *Solomon* in particular, there is one Obſervation ſtill behind, which will yet farther recommend the Text to your beſt Attention. For of all thoſe three Thouſand Proverbs, which are Recorded as the products of *Solomon*'s Wiſdom, there is not any one the Holy Ghoſt has thought fit

to repeat ſo often, or inculcate more frequently, than this of the Text; for it is repeated thrice in this one Chapter, beſides what it is in other places of this Book of *Proverbs*. In all which places the Wiſe man gives us to underſtand, that the wonderful Providence of God does rule and govern all the Actions of Men. The Metaphor of a *Way*, which is here uſed in the Text, is known in Scripture to denote all the Actions of Men, whether good or evil: And according to this latitude, the Metaphor here uſed is underſtood variouſly by Divines: St. *Cyprian* refers it to the good Actions of Men, and accordingly interprets the Text thus, *Cor viri cogitet juſta, ut à Deo dirigantur greſſus ejus: Let the Heart of Man*, ſaith he, *think righteous things, that ſo his goings may be directed by the Lord.* But tho' this be a very great Truth, namely, that *Good Actions are govern'd and directed by the Providence of God*, yet others rather underſtand the Text of mens *wicked Actions*; for the Hebrew word חָשַׁב, which we render *Deviſeth*, is for the moſt part uſed in a bad ſenſe; and what we render *Man*, is *Adam* in the Original,

Original, which according to *Luther*'s known Obſervation is ſeldom taken in a good ſenſe: So that the words taken in this limited and reſtrained ſenſe, will run thus; *A mans Heart*, i. e. *the Heart of* Adam, *or of a wicked Man, deviſeeh and contriveth his wicked ways; but the Lord, by his wonderful Providence, governeth and directeth all his ſteps. The Heathen* may *rage*, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, *and the People deviſe vain things; yet he that ſitteth in Heaven ſhall laugh them to ſcorn, the Lord ſhall have them in deriſion.* God, as he is Omniſcient, can eaſily know all the wicked devices of ſinful Men; and as he is Omnipotent, he can as eaſily over-rule them, and direct them ſo as may be moſt for his own Glory and the good of his People. God, He is no idle Spectator in this vaſt Theatre of the World; but *doth continually*, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, *whatſoever pleaſeth him both in Heaven and in Earth.* Indeed, he has made Man a free Agent; and therefore as the *Son of Sirach* ſpeaks, *He leaves him in the Counſel of his own hand, and allows him to act according to the liberty of his Will:* But then, as the Wiſe Rector and Almighty

mighty Governor of the Univerſe, He over-ſees and over-rules all the Actions and Devices of wicked Men; ſo that ſuch as will not do him true and laudable ſervice, by obeying the known Will of his Precept, are forced to obey the ſecret Will of his Providence, and are made ſubſervient to his Everlaſting Counſels. Thus, tho' the *Heart a of wicked man deviſeth his wicked ways; yet the Lord governeth and directeth all his ſteps.* For the fuller opening of which Words, I deſign to confine my preſent diſcourſe to the diſcovering of theſe two things.

Firſt, How the over-ruling Providence of God is imployed about ſin and wickedneſs whilſt it is but *in fieri*, or the Heart of Man is but yet deviſing it. And,

Secondly, How it governs and directs ſin *in facto eſſe*, when ſin is brought forth into act. And,

Firſt, Of the Firſt, how Gods over-ruling Providence is imployed about ſin whilſt it is yet but *in fieri, whilſt the Heart of Man is yet but contriving and deviſing it.* And this will appear in ſome meaſure from theſe following Conſiderations.

1*ſt*.

1*ſt*. God's Providence orders and directs ſin and wickedneſs to ſuch objects as he thinks fit. It is a true ſaying of *Hugo de Sancto Victo*, i. e. *Deus non dat malis voluntatibus corruptionem, ſed tantum ordinem*, God, ſaith he, *never infuſes any corruption or wickedneſs into the Wills of Men, but only gives Order and Direction to their Wicked Actions.* All the preparations and contrivances of ſin are from the depraved hearts of Men; the ordering of them to particular and ſuitable objects, from the good providence of God. As the Huntſman in *Bellarmines* compariſon, holds the Hound in a Slip, and ſuffers him only to run at ſuch Game as he beſt liketh: So God keeps a conſtant Watch upon the Wicked, he puts his Hook in their Noſe, and his Bridle in their Lips, and ſuffers not their Rage to break forth, but only on ſuch perſons as he thinks fit. We know Gods Providence extended it ſelf to the very Swine, and would not ſuffer Satan to enter into them without his particular Warrant; and ſure then we need not doubt but this Providence of God is more eminently concerned about Man, whom he was pleaſed to make after his own

own Image and likeneſs. God does therefore ſet a Guard upon the malice of Satan and his Inſtruments, nor can it break forth but as he permits it; ſometimes on his Enemies for their deſtruction, and ſometimes on his own People for their chaſtiſement: A proof of the latter we have, *Iſa.* 10. 5, 6, 7. at the 5th Verſe *Sennacherib King of* Aſſyria *is called the Rod of God's Anger, and the Staff of his Indignation*; which metaphorical expreſſions import thus much, that Men are but Inſtruments in the Hands of Gods Providence, and muſt expect the direction of a ſuperiour Cauſe. Now this *Aſſyrian*, this *Sennacharib*, is ſaid to be ſent and directed againſt *Iſrael*, an hypocritical Nation, and now become the People of God's Wrath. And at the 7th *Verſe* we find that this Staff of Gods Indignation was more in the Hand than in the Heart of this proud *Aſſyrian*. *Howbeit*, ſaith God, *he meaneth not ſo, neither doth his Heart think ſo; but it is in his Heart to deſtroy, and to cut off Nations, not a few.* There was no need God ſhould inſtil any wickedneſs into the Heart of *Sennacharib*, who is here in the Prophet called the *Aſſyrian*; it ſeems

ſeems it was full enough, and too full before. *Beroſus*, an Antient Hiſtorian, has left his Character of him, *Sennacherib, qui apud* Aſſyrios *regnabat*; *omnem* Aſiam *&* Ægyptum *bello infeſtabat, Sennacherib*, ſaith he, *who was King of the* Aſſyrians, *vexed and infeſted all* Aſia *and* Ægypt *with Bloody Wars.* Ye ſee the Head and Heart of this *Aſſyrian* were full enough of devices how to ſatisfie his Ambition and raiſe his Empire on the ruins of other Nations. And now was the time for God's Providence to ſtep in and determin him to what Object he thought moſt proper. He therefore directs the fury of this *Aſſyrian* chiefly againſt *Iſrael*, and uſes him as a Rod to chaſtiſe his own choſen People. And as God does thus imploy the wicked, as Schoolmaſters, to correct his People; ſo he alſo imploys them as Executioners to puniſh his Enemies. Hence, *Iſaiah* 13. 17. God is ſaid to ſtir up the *Medes* againſt the *Babylonians*, a People notorious for their Enmity to God, and the *Jews*. Theſe *Medes* and *Perſians*, are upon this account, called God's *ſanctified ones*, Verſe 3. not in reſpect of any inherent righteouſneſs or holineſs

holineſs in them, but becauſe, like the Veſſels of the Sanctuary, ſet a-part for Gods ſervice, and excited by a ſecret inſtinct of Providence, to execute wrath upon wicked *Babylon*. *Thus God turns the Hearts of Kings, as the Rivers of Waters, whitherſoever he pleaſeth.* Tho' their Hearts be very full of wickedneſs, and like the troubled Sea, are always ready to caſt up the Mire and Dirt of Sin, yet God's Providence ſhuts up this Sea with Bars that it cannot paſs, till God is pleaſed to break up theſe Bars, and let it ruſh ſometimes on his Enemies, to overwhelm them; ſometimes on his own People to chaſtiſe them, and waſh away their Filth.

2*ly*. The Providence of God does not only determine the wickedneſs of Man, as to the Object: but likewiſe as to the *Modus*, and meaſure of it. If God did not bound the Malice of Satan and wicked Men, their little Finger would be bigger than their Loins are now; and inſtead of Chaſtiſing God's People with Whips, like cruel *Rehoboam*, they would ſcourge them with Scorpions. When God was pleaſed to break down the Hedge of his Providence, he had

ſet

ſet about *Job*, with what fury did the *Sabeans* and *Chaldeans* kill his Servants, drive his Camels, and ſpoil him of all his Goods? Nor did all this miſchief ſatisfie Satans Malice; he would fain have gone further, and made attempts upon his Life: But God here was pleaſed to ſet limits to his fury, as we read, *Job* 2. 6. *Behold*, ſaith God to Satan, *he is now in thy Hand, only ſpare his Life.* I need not ſpare much time in proving the boundleſs Malice of Satan and his Inſtruments againſt God's People; we may learn enough of this, from that remarkable Name the Prophet beſtows upon them, Iſaiah 27. 1. *In that day the Lord, with his great and ſtrong Sword, ſhall puniſh Leviathan, the peircing Serpent.* By Leviathan in this place, is generally underſtood Satan and his malicious Inſtruments; and the word in the Hebrew ſignifies Augmentation or Addition, intimating the boundleſs Malice of Satan and his Inſtruments, who ſtill deſire to lay more burdens on the Godly, to increaſe their Troubles and augment their Afflictions. But God, he is faithful and merciful, and by his Providence takes care, that his People be not

not tempted above what they are able to bear: And therefore the same Prophet tells us at Verse 8. *That God allows Satan and his Instruments to smite his People only in measure.* There is a greater Elegance in the Hebrew, than is expreſt in our Engliſh Tranſlation; for the word which we render Meaſure, ſignifies one of the ſmalleſt Meaſures in uſe among the *Jews*, namely, that Meaſure which they called the *Sea*, containing no more than the third part of an *Epha*. Such, you ſee, is the wonderful goodneſs of God, that he curbs and reſtrains the Fury of thoſe Leviathans; and tho' they think no Strokes too many, no Burdens too heavy for the People of God, yet he limits their Malice, and allows them only to ſmite in Meaſure, and with Moderation.

3ly. The Providence of God does alſo determin the Malice and Wickedneſs of Men, as to its time and duration. There is indeed a great and ſad truth in the obſervation of the Antient Tragedian, *Nullum ad nocendum tempus anguſtum è malis*, *No time*, ſaith he, *is too little, no time unſeaſonable for the Wicked to do Miſchief*; yet there is ſome com-

comfort in what the Wiſe Man tells us, Eccleſ. 3. 1 *That God has ſet a Seaſon to every Thing, and a time to every Purpoſe under Heaven.* And indeed the Providence of God does limit the Wicked, both as to the time, when their Fury ſhall begin, and alſo how long it ſhall continue. Our bleſſed Saviour was no ſooner born into the World, but there was a bloody *Herod* ſeeking to deſtroy him, and ſend him out of it again: Afterwards when he was to enter upon his Miniſtry, we find Satan carrying him to a Pinacle of the Temple, and tempting him to caſt himſelf down from that dangerous height: And when all this proved ſucceſleſs, ſeveral ſtratagems were uſed by the *Jews* to diſpatch him out of this World. But God, who has put Times and Seaſons in his own Power, defeated all theſe their wicked purpoſes, till that determinate time was come mentioned by St. Luke 22. 53. *Tho' I was with you daily in the Temple* ſaith Chriſt, *yet you could not ſtretch forth any hands againſt me; but now is your Hour and the power of Darkneſs.* And as the Wickedneſs of Man is limited, in reſpect of its beginning, ſo likewiſe in

reſpect of its continuance and duration. Thus God determined the afflictions of *Iſrael* in *Ægypt* four hundred years; and their Captivity in *Babylon* to ſeventy. If God had not predetermined the perſecutions of the Primitive Chriſtians, St. *John* could not have foretold they ſhould laſt no longer than forty two Months. Now if we reckon theſe Months by Sabbaths of Years (as the honeſt Author of the Book of Martyrs tells us, he was taught to reckon them by a particular Revelation) they will amount to the ſum of two hundred ninety four years, the preciſe time of the ten firſt Perſecutions. I ſhall add but one inſtance more of theſe effects of God's Providence, and that one is hinted to me by a Right Reverend Hiſtorian of our own Nation. It ſeems in Queen *Mary's* days, *Gardiner* and the other bloody Papiſts hoped to continue their perſecution of the Proteſtants till they had utterly deſtroyed them: But God's good Providence allowed them but a very ſhort time to rage in; for when Queen *Mary* fell into that kind of Dropſie, which Phyſitians call the *Mola*, the wiſeſt of her Friends and Phyſitians

ſitians were ſo far infatuated, as to conclude her to be with Child. By this means all Phyſick was forbid, till her Diſtemper grew deſperate, and ſo her unexpected death put a ſpeedy period to the Rage and Fury of the Papiſts. Thus I have ſhewn you how the Providence of God is employed about ſin and wickedneſs whilſt it is *in fieri*, whilſt the Heart of Man is but conceiving and deviſing it. I now proceed to ſhew how the ſame Providence is employed about ſin *in facto eſſe*, after it is finiſht and brought forth into Act. Tho' Almighty God can wither the Arm of a wicked *Jeroboam*, and hinder the Execution of his wicked Deſigns: Tho' he can ſtrike the Sinner with a Thunderbolt into Hell before he accompliſhes his miſchievous Enterpriſes, yet having made Man a free Agent, as I ſaid before, he allows him to act according to the liberty he has implanted in his Nature. *Ratio non eſt abſque libertate Arbitrii*, ſaith *Damaſcen*, *there can be no Reaſon, where there is no liberty to act.* But tho' God does permit the heart of man freely to deviſe and accompliſh its ways, yet ſtill by his Providence, *he rules and*

directs his Steps. Indeed the wicked themſelves are far from deſigning any good, but yet God makes their blackeſt deſigns ſubſervient to his glory. They do at beſt but reſemble thoſe monſtrous People, in *Pliny*, whoſe Feet ſtood contrary to their Faces, or, if you pleaſe, to take a more familiar compariſon, like Watermen, they are made by Providence to row one way whilſt they look another. To this purpoſe is the known obſervation of St. *Auſtin*, *Bonus Deus non ſineret fieri mala, niſi Omnipotens ex malis bona elicere poteſſet*, *God who is good*, ſaith he, *would never permit ſin, but that being Omnipotent, he is able to extract Good out of the greateſt Evils.* The Rod of *Moſes*, whilſt it lay upon the Earth, was an ugly, dreadful, and poyſonous Serpent, but in the Hand of God and *Moſes* an Inſtrument of great and glorious wonders. Such is the Power and Wiſdom of God, that he is able to bring Light out of Darkneſs, and work great and glorious ends out of the moſt black devices and machinations of ſinful Men. Some few Inſtances of this I ſhall give you in theſe following particulars.

1*ſt.*

1*ſt.* God does often take occaſion from ſin, to glorifie the Riches of his Goodneſs and Mercy. It is the Tradition of the Antients, that the Skull of *Adam* was found on Mount *Calvary*, the very place of our Saviours Crucifixion. And there is not leſs Comfort in St. *Jeroms* Note, on *Mat.* 1. Namely, that no holy Women, but ſuch Notorious Sinners as *Thamar*, *Raab* and *Bathſheba* are mentioned in the Genealogy of the Bleſſed Jeſus, and all this to denote thus much unto us, that ſin was the Cauſe which brought our Saviour into the World, and gave God an opportunity to magnifie his Free Grace and Mercy unto Sinners. So that now we may take up the ranting language of St. *Gregory*, *O felix culpa! quæ talem meruit Redemptorem, O happy ſin! happy ſure upon this account, that it has through Gods good Providence, obtained ſo great and ſo glorious a Redeemer. The Whole*, ſaith our Saviour, *needs not the Phyſitian*; and where there is no Miſery, there is no need of Mercy. Had there been no bitterneſs in the Waters of *Marah*, *Moſes* had not needed Sweet wood to have thrown into them. So had there been

no ſin, there had not needed the Tears of Repentance, and conſequently there had been no need of the Wood of the Croſs to ſweeten theſe bitter Waters.

2dly, As God has thus taken occaſion from Sin to commend his Free Grace and Infinite Mercy to the World; ſo he has alſo taken occaſion from hence to glorifie his Holineſs and Juſtice. If bold ſinners ſhall dare to run upon the Boſſes of his Buckler, and bid defiance to the great Majeſty of Heaven: If neither the Threats of his Law can drive them to Obedience, nor yet the Promiſes of the Goſpel invite them to their Duty, there remains then *nothing, but a fearful looking for of Judgment and fiery Indignation*, to devour theſe Adverſaries. Hence *Solomon* tells us, *ver.* 4. of this Chapter, that *God has made all things for himſelf; yea, even the wicked has he made for the day of Evil.* Tho' he may endure with much Long-ſuffering the Veſſels of Wrath, and employ them as Rods for the Chaſtiſement of others; yet at the laſt he caſts theſe Rods into the Fire, and magnifies his Power and Juſtice upon them, when once

once they are ripe for destruction. It is very observable, that the first *Hallelujah* which we find in the Old Testament, is in the *Psalms*, where mention is made of the destruction of Gods Enemies; and the first *Hallelujah* which is mention'd in the New Testament, is, where the overthrow of Antichrist is foretold in the *Revelations*. Should God suffer sinners still to go unpunish'd, it would reflect upon his Holiness, and cast a stain upon his Justice. Men would be apt to think God a Patron of Wickedness, and would be very much encourag'd in the ways of Ungodliness. God therefore, to vindicate his Honour, and deter Men from sin, is pleased very frequently, in this World, to send signal Judgments upon the Workers of Iniquity. Thus when proud *Pharaoh* had a long time withstood all the Miracles of *Moses*, and wrought his Heart at last to the highest degree of hardness, God did then resolve to glorifie himself in his ruin and destruction: And that he might leave some signal Monuments of his Wrath to succeeding Generations, *Orosius* an Ancient Author tells us, that *the prints and footsteps of their Chariots*

were a long time after to be ſeen on the ſhoar, and in the bottom of the Red Sea. We may do well alſo to remember that *Fire and Brimſtone*, which was rained from Heaven on *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*. *Brochardus*, and other ſacred Geographers, inform us, that that very Land does ſtill mourn in Duſt and Aſhes, and ſuch diſmal Clouds of Smoak continually aſcend from it, as make it repreſent nothing ſo much, as the very Mouth and Entrance of Hell. Nay farther yet, that God might make abundant proviſions for the Honour of his Juſtice (as ſome have computed) this one ſingle Judgment is mention'd in Scripture above twenty times: God's Providence ſo ordering it, that theſe wicked *Sodomites* might be ſet forth for an Example, ſuffering the vengeance of Eternal Fire. And this is the ſecond End to which Gods Providence direct ſin, namely, the glorifying of his Juſtice.

3dly, God's Providence does farther make uſe of ſin, to humble his own People. When *David* had murther'd his loyal Subject *Uriah*, and committed Folly with his Wife; God does afterwards make uſe of theſe ſins, to keep his

his Servant humble. To this end we find *Shimei*, one a kin to *Uriah*, ſent by a ſecret impulſe of Providence, firſt to Curſe *David* as a *Bloody Man*, and ſo to remind him of the murther; and then to make him ſenſible of his Adultery, by caſting Stones at him, a Puniſhment under the Law appointed to the *Adulterer*. Now what Influence this piece of Providence had upon *David*, we learn from *2 Sam. 16. 9, 10.* where, when the Sons of *Zerviah* would have ſlain *Shimei*, according to his deſerts, *David* returns a Negative Anſwer in theſe paſſionate words, *What have I to do with you, ye Sons of Zerviah?* And then ſee his Humility in the next words, *Let him Curſe, becauſe the Lord has ſaid unto him, Curſe David.* He knew God, by this piece of Providence had a deſign to call his ſins to remembrance, and the ſenſe of theſe makes him ſo humble, as to think himſelf worthy of all the Indignities a Curſed *Shimei* could offer to the Lords Anointed. There is a great Truth in the Saying of St. *Auſtin*, *Audeo dicere ſuperbis interdum utile eſſe in peccatum cadere: I dare boldly affirm*, ſays that Holy Father, *that it is profitable*

table for proud men to fall ſometimes into Scandalous ſins. St. *Peter*, that Great Apoſtle, is obſerved by the Antients to have been one of the forwardeſt and moſt confident of Chriſt's Diſciples: And we may alſo gather ſo much from that Confident Anſwer he returned to Chriſt, when he told him, that *tho' all Men forſook him, yet he would follow him to the laſt*: But when God's Providence had allowed Satan to ſift him, and chaſtiſe his Confidence by a ſore Fall, we find him falling lower in his own Thoughts to: For when Chriſt, *John ult.* puts the Queſtion to him, *Peter, loveſt thou me more than theſe*? And he puts it thrice to remind him of his thrice Denial. *Peter*, ver. 17. returns this modeſt and humble Anſwer, *Lord, thou knoweſt all things, thou knoweſt that I love thee.* There is indeed no better way to take down the Peacock's Plumes, than by diſcovering her black Feet; and hold but a Looking-Glaſs before the ſtout Elephant, and you will ſoon teach him to abhor his Deformity.

4*thly*, One end more to which God directs the Wickedneſs of the World, is the

the glorifiing his Wiſdom. The Prophet *Eſay* tells us, that *God is wonderful in Counſel, and excellent in working.* Every Event of Providence is of ſuch excellent contrivance, and manag'd with ſuch admirable Wiſdom, that we may ſay of the Works of God's Providence, what the *Pſalmiſt* does of the Works of Creation: *O Lord how manifold are thy Works! In wiſdom haſt thou made them all; the Earth is full of thy Riches.* So clear a Truth is this, that it has not eſcaped the Obſervations of the Heathens; hence it was that they ſet forth their Gods with Harps in their hands, to ſhew the Harmony they obſerved in the Government of the World. Tho' there may happen very often great Confuſions here below, and the World may ſeem to run upon Wheels, as *Ezekiel* himſelf once thought; yet the ſame Prophet found at laſt, that there were *Eyes* in theſe *Wheels*, a Wiſe Providence which did move and conduct them all to great and Glorious Ends. The truth of this might eaſily be made to appear more at large by conſidering ſome of the moſt rugged paſſages of Providence, ſuch as ſeem at

firſt

firſt view to have been performed with the greateſt negligence and deformity, and yet when examin'd from the beginning to the end, have been found to have admirable beauty and Comlineſs in them. But becauſe the Time will not allow of many Inſtances, it may ſuffice at preſent to ſhew the truth of this in the famous Hiſtory of *Jonah*: That this Prophet, when ſent about ſo weighty a matter as the preſervation of great *Niniveh*, that he ſhould make delays even when their deſtruction was but Forty days off: Nay more, that he ſhould fly to *Tarſhiſh*; nay farther yet, that he ſhould be caſt into the Sea by the malicious Mariners, and ſwallowed up preſently by a mercileſs Whale: All theſe ſeemed at firſt to be ſo many Errata's of God's Providence and contribute little to the Converſion of *Nineveh*; yet all theſe ſeeming Diſadvantages were ſo wiſely managed by God's Providence, as to prove great Advantages to that ſo important buſineſs: For it is more than a probable Opinion of Divines, that theſe malicious Mariners were a ſpecial Occaſion that *Jonah*'s Preaching was ſo ſucceſsful. For it was

theſe

theſe Mariners that informed the *Nineviteſ* what had hapned unto *Jonah*, how he had been caſt into the Sea, ſwallowed up by the Whale, and conſequently could not, but by a ſpecial Miracle, have been conducted unto *Niniveh*: And this was that which procured the more credit to *Jonah*'s Preaching, which frightned the *Ninivites* into that moſt rigorous Faſt, which was enjoyned by *Sardanapalus* both on Man and Beaſt. Thus we ſee how the Wiſdom of God's Providence directed the ſin of *Jonah*, and the malice of the Mariners, to work out that end they ſeemed directly to oppoſe. In this and ſuch like Inſtances as may be obſerved in the World, we cannot but take notice of the beauties of Providence, and ought to admire and adore the infinite VViſdom of our God, which does ſo eminently appear in the wonderful goverment of the greateſt Diſaſters and Confuſions here below. I proceed now to draw ſome few Corolaries from what hath beeu delivered.

Firſt, We may learn from hence, to abhor the Blaſphemy of ſuch men as ſeem to make God the Author of Sin.

Ye

Ye hear it is *the Heart of Man* which *deviſeth its own wickedneſs*, and that God by his wiſe Providence does only direct their Wickedneſs to great and glorious Ends. Juſt as a skilful Phyſician, who does not put Poyſon into Serpents and other Venemous Creatures, but only converts their Poyſons into Sovereign Medicines.

Secondly, We alſo learn from hence, whence it is that there is no more Miſchief done in the World. When we conſider the great Malice of Satan and his Inſtruments, how great alſo is their Power, and how formidable their Numbers, we may juſtly wonder that this World is any better than a larger *Bethlehem*: But we owe our ſafety and happineſs to the good Providence of God: He ſets an hedge about his People; he curbs the Fury of their Enemies, and directs even the Wickedneſs of Satan and his Inſtruments, ſo as may beſt ſerve his own Glory, and the good of his People. It was well ſaid of *Antoninus*, that noble Philoſopher, *Who would deſire to live in this World, if it were deſtitute of God and Providence? If all were left to Chance and*

we

we expoſed every where to innumerable Enemies and Dangers? But ſince there is an over-ruling Providence, ſaith he, Σέβω, καὶ ἐυφραίνω, καὶ ἀταράχῳ τῷ διοικοῦντι. *I adore that Providence, and live ſweetly and pleaſantly, confiding always in Gods Almighty Protection.* To the ſame purpoſe is that of the Royal Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 97.1. *The Lord reigneth, let the Earth rejoyce: Let the multitude of the Iſles be glad thereof.* But,

Thirdly, It is not enough that we rejoyce under the protection of God's Providence; but we muſt alſo adore and worſhip his great and glorious Name, who does ſuch Wonders for the Children of Men. *Pſal.* 78. 10. we are told that *the Wrath of Man ſhall praiſe the Lord: The remainder of Wrath he ſhall reſtrain*: The Septuagint read the latter part of the Verſe thus, ἑορτάζει σοι *the Rage of Man,* ſay they, *ſhall keep Holiday unto the Lord,* i. e. *give his People opportunities of lauding and magnifyng his glorious Name.* And ſure no People in the World ever had more cauſe to praiſe and magnify the Name of God, than we of this Church and Nation. What miraculous Preſervations has his good Providence

vidence wrought for us? VVhat Plots and Deſcents has he detected and defeated? How has he baffled the profoundeſt Policy of the ſubtileſt *Achitophel*, and made him prove, according to his name in Hebrew, no better than the Brother or Couſin-Germain to a *Fool*? Oh then! let us praiſe our God according to his excellent Greatneſs; and being wonderfully *delivered from the hands of our Enemies, let us ſerve him without fear, in holineſs and righteouſneſs before him all the dayes of our life.*

This God of his infinite Mercy grant, for the merits of his deareſt Son, &c.

SERMON.

SERMON XII.

Preached *November.* 27. 1692. the Sunday before the Author died.

Heb. ii. 3.

How ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great Salvation?

SAint *Paul* in the former Chap. diſplays the excellent Glory and Majeſty of our Saviour: He ſtyles him, *ver.* 2. the *Son of God*; the *Heir of all things*, and *Maker of the Worlds*: He tells us us farther, *ver.* 3. that *He is the brightneſs of his Fathers*

Glory, the expreſs Image of his Perſon, and the upholder of all things: In the following part of the Chapter he ſhews, how far Chriſt tranſcends all the Holy Angels: Theſe, he ſays, are but *Servants* and *Miniſtring Spirits*; but Chriſt, he is the *Eternal* and *only begotten Son of God*: Theſe are all commanded to fall down and worſhip Chriſt; but He has a Throne, a Scepter, *a Scepter of Righteouſneſs*, yea, the Scepter of his own Heavenly Kingdom. Thus great, thus glorious a Perſon is Chriſt, Heaven it ſelf has nothing greater; and yet as great, as glorious as He is, his Father thought fit to employ him in the work of Mans Salvation. O the wonderful Condeſcentions of Heaven! We may be ſure God is moſt willing to ſave poor Sinners, ſeeing he ſends to them, and that his own Son, to beſeech and entreat them to accept of Salvation. Hence is that of St. *Paul*, in the beginning of this Epiſtle, *God, who, at ſundry times, and in divers manners, ſpake in time paſt unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in theſe laſt days ſpoken unto us by his Son.* Had God ſpoken to us by the meaneſt of his Prophets, it had been ſtrange and wonderful Condeſcenſion,

ſcenſion, but that he ſhould ſend his own Son to preach the Goſpel, and intreat Rebel ſinners to be reconciled to Heaven, and accept of Eternal Happineſs; this is ſuch an inſtance of ſtupendious Love and Mercy, as does as much exceed our imaginations, as it does our Deſerts!

St. *Paul* having thus diſpiayed the Excellent Majeſty of Chriſt, and the infinite Riches of Gods Free Grace and Mercy, in that he ſent his Eternal Son to be the firſt Preacher of the Goſpel, and tender Salvation to loſt and undone ſinners, he begins the 2*d. Chapter* with a ſerious and paſſionate Admonition; *We therefore*, ſaith he, *ought to give the more earneſt heed to the things which we have heard, leſt at any time we ſhould let them ſlip.* If God had conveyed the Goſpel to Chriſtians, as he did the Law unto the Jews, by the Miniſtry of Angels, we could not have ſlighted it without groſs ingratitude; and our *Diſobedience*, as we are told, *ver.* 2. *would have received a juſt recompence of reward*: Of *how much ſorer puniſhment ſhall we now be thought worthy*, ſeeing the Eternal Son of God condeſcended to be of the

Order of Predicants, seeing Christ Jesus himself vouchsafed to be the *first Preacher* of the Gospel; how should we then honour and value this Gospel? What earnest heed should we give to the things contained in it, or preached from it? Whatever Admonitions, Exhortations or Reproofs Ministers give us out of these Sacred Oracles, should not be look'd upon as the Words of frail Men, but as they are in truth the Words of God and Christ. Christians therefore will be most inexcusable: They of all men will deserve the severest Punishments, *if they shall neglect so great Salvation.* And because the danger is thus great, our Apostle is the more earnest and passionate in his Exhortation: He employs all his Divine Rhetorick, to make Christians sensible of their greater Priviledge, and consequently of their greater Obligations to obey the Gospel: *How shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation.*

Having by this short Preface led you into the very Bowels of the Text, I shall fetch from thence these Three Observations.

First,

First, That the *Salvation* which is publiſhed by the Goſpel, is exceeding great.

Secondly, That thoſe Chriſtians which *neglect* this *great Salvation*, muſt expect the ſevereſt Puniſhments in Hell.

Thirdly, That Miniſters may very well be allowed to be mighty earneſt and paſſionate in their Exhortations of Obedience to the Goſpel.

First, I begin with the firſt of theſe, namely, to ſhew you, that the *Salvation* which is publiſhed by the Goſpel, is exceeding great. It is called *Great Salvation* in the Text, yea the Apoſtle puts an Emphaſis upon it, and calls it, *So great Salvation*. Learned Men render it *Eximiam ut mire magnam ſalutem*, i. e. *Moſt admirable and moſt excellent Salvation*: And it will appear at large to be ſo from theſe following Conſiderations:

1*ſt*. The greatneſs of this *Salvation* will appear if we conſider the greatneſs of the Price that was paid for it. The worth and excellency of a thing, is uſually meaſur'd by the greatneſs of its price. Now how great was that price which was paid for this Salvation?

St.

St. *Peter* tells us, we were *not redeemed with ſuch corruptible things, as Silver and Gold; but with the precious Blood of the Son of God.* Had we offer'd a *thouſand Rams, and ten thouſand Rivers of Oil:* Had *we given the fruit of our Bodies, for the ſin of our Souls*; yea, had it been poſſible for us to have ſacrificed whole Hecatombs of Angels to the Juſtice of Heaven, they would not all have been ſufficient to atone for our Sins, and purchaſe this Salvation: Nothing could purchaſe it but the *Blood of Jeſus*; and that not only as he was Man, but as he was God too. Hence we are ſaid expreſly to be purchas'd with the *Blood of God*, Act. 20. 28. We ſee an Infinite price was paid Heaven to purchaſe this Salvation: And therefore we may well allow the Apoſtles Emphaſis of *ſo great Salvation.*

2ly. The greatneſs of this Salvation will yet further appear, if we conſider the greatneſs of thoſe evils it delivers us from. It is an excellent ſaying of *Seneca, Lenocinium eſt gaudii antecedens metus*, the greatneſs of the danger uſes to commend and inhance the greatneſs of the deliverance. Now how great was the danger we were

were in? how great those Evils we were exposed to? The Prophet *Esay* gives us a most Tragical Description of the Infernal *Tophet*, which was to be the Portion of the Rebellious Sinner, Chap. 30. 31. *Tophet*, saith he, *is prepared of old, the Pile thereof is Fire and much Wood, and the Breath of the Lord like a stream of Brimstone, doth kindle it continually.* See how each word is arm'd with Terror: It seems there is an eternal *Tophet* prepared for all the Enemies of Heaven: It seems the Torments of this dreadful place is set forth by Fire, one of the cruellest of the Elements. Nay give me leave to observe farther to you, that this Fire of *Tophet* can be no ordinary material Fire, seeing we are told it was originally prepared for the Devil and his Angels. For since they are Spiritual and Immaterial Beings, they cannot be Tormented by any ordinary material Fire, The Fire therefore of *Tophet* must be of such a strange and dreadful Nature, that this Fire we use is only fit to be a cold and faint emblem of it; and well may we conclude so much, seeing it is said to be kindled by the Breath of the

Almighty. The fiery Furnace of *Babylon* was dreadful enough, tho' it was kindled only by the breath of an Earthly King; how dreadful then muſt the Furnace of Hell be, which has all the Ingredients of Torture Omnipotent Vengeance can furniſh it with? This Fire of *Tophet* or Hell, is ſaid yet farther, to *be prepared for the Devil and his Angels*. Now we know theſe Helliſh Fiends are the moſt malicious Enemies of Heaven: Theſe ambitious Spirits endeavoured at the very firſt to dethrone their Almighty Creator; and ſince they failed in that black deſign, they have ever ſince diſcovered their inveterate hatred of God, by tempting Mankind into the ſame curſed Conſpiracy againſt him. Sure then that Fire, which is prepared for theſe malicious Enemies of Heaven, cannot poſſibly want any Ingredients of Torture, Infinite Wiſdom can invent, or Infinite Power inflict. Now ſuch devouring Flames as theſe were prepared for obſtinate ſinners, as well as for theſe fallen Angels. There is one Conſideration ſtill behind, which will make theſe Torments appear more dreadful, and that is the Eternal Duration

tion of them. For here it is that the Worm never dies; here it is that the Fire is not quenched: When the ſinner has lain in Hell as many millions of years, as there are Sands on the Sea-ſhore, he will be no nearer an end of his Torments, than he was the firſt Moment of his entrance into them. Who can read without trembling, what St. *Mark* tells us, *Chap.* 9. 49. Namely, *that the Damned ſhall be ſalted with Fire.* Such it ſeems is the dreadful Nature of the Infernal Flames, that they do Torment, but not Conſume: Like Salt they preſerve thoſe wretched Perſons they ſeem to devour. O cruel Mercy of Helliſh Flames! O Preſervation, worſe than the moſt dreadful Deſtruction! Thus great are thoſe Evils we are delivered from, and you will eaſily conclude how great that Salvation is which delivers us from them. The Children of *Iſrael* did exceedingly rejoyce when they were delivered from the Tyranny of *Pharaoh*, and the Slavery of *Egypt*. But ſure Hell is a more dreadful kind of Bondage than *Egypts*; and Satan a worſe ſort of Tyrant than *Pharaoh*, therefore the Salvation

tion of the Text, which delivers us from these dreadful and infinite Evils, must needs be exceeding great.

3*ly*. The greatness of this Salvation will appear yet further, if we consider that Infinite and Eternal Happiness it brings along with it. This Salvation does not only deliver us from Hell, and Eternal Damnation; but it gives us also a Right and Title to the endless Joys of Heaven: Even those Joys *which Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entred into the Heart of Man to conceive.* If the sweet society of Saints and Angels, if the most ravishing enjoyment of the Blessed Trinity, if an uninterrupted and eternal fruition of the most desirable Pleasures; if all this be sufficient to make the *Salvation* in the Text exceeding great, then we may pardon St. *Paul*'s Emphasis, and allow him to call it *so great Salvation*; for this is that *Salvation* which Christ has purchast, and the Gospel publish'd to the World. Hence Christ is styl'd *the Author of Eternal Salvation*, Heb. 5. 9. and is said *to have obtained Eternal Redemption for us*, *Heb.* 9. 12.. *Joshua* was deservedly accounted *a mighty* Sa-

Saviour, becauſe having delivered *Iſrael* from their malicious Enemies, he gave them a quiet Poſſeſſion of the Earthly *Canaan*. How great a Saviour is our *Joſhua*, or Jeſus, who having vanquiſhed our Spiritual Enemies, has purchaſed for us the poſſeſſion of the Heavenly *Canaan*?

4*ly*. The greatneſs of this *Salvation* will further appear, if we conſider the Extent and Amplitude of it. This *Salvation* is an univerſal *Salvation*, all Men have a Right and Title to it; tho' *Salvation* of old was only of the *Jews*, yet now Chriſt *is a Light to lighten the* Gentiles, *as well as the Glory of his People* Iſrael. God is now no reſpecter of Perſons, but in every Nation, he that feareth God and worketh Righteouſneſs, is accepted of him. They are highly injurious to the goodneſs of God, and to that *Salvation* which was wrought by Chriſt, who would have it reſtrained to a certain number of Perſons. For it is moſt plain from Scripture, that God would have all Men to be ſaved. Hear what the Angels ſaid unto the Shepherds, Luke 2. 10. *Behold, I bring you good Tidings, of great Joy, which ſhall be*

be unto all People. Hence Chriſt is ſaid *to give himſelf a Ranſom for all,* 1 Tim. 2. 6. as St. *John* ſpeaks, 1 Epiſt. 2. 2. *He is the Propitiation for our Sins, and not for ours only, but alſo for the Sins of the whole World.* If theſe places of Scripture be not full and clear enough, St *Paul* will tell you, *that Chriſt taſted Death for every Man,* Heb. 2.9. I ſhall add but one Text more to convince you of this Truth, and it ſhall be that of St. *Peter,* 2 Epiſt. 2. 2. where he ſpeaks of *Falſe Teachers, ſuch as privily bring in Damnable Hereſies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themſelves ſwift Deſtruction.* It ſeems Chriſt bought thoſe that are Damned, as well as thoſe that are Saved; and conſequently the *Salvation* or *Redemption* which he wrought, muſt needs be Univerſal: None are excluded from it, but ſuch as exclude themſelves by their Obſtinancy and Impenitency. Now if we lay theſe Four Cnſiderations together; namely, *The greatneſs of the Price which was paid for this Salvation. The greatneſs of thoſe Evils it delivers us from. The Infinite and Eternal Happineſs it brings along with it.* And Laſtly,

Laſtly, *The Extent and Amplitude of it, which is ſo great, as to include* both *Jew* and *Gentile*; we may ſafely conclude with St. *Paul*, that it is *great Salvation*. Thus I have diſpatcht the Firſt General I propoſed, and proceed now to the Second.

Secondly, Namely, To ſhew you that thoſe Chriſtians, *who neglect this great Salvation*, muſt expect the ſevereſt puniſhments in Hell. This may be gathered from the words of the Text, where St. *Paul* delivers himſelf in theſe Emphatical Expreſſions, *How ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great Salvation*? As much as if the Apoſtle ſhould have ſaid, Chriſtians, who diſobey the Goſpel, muſt never hope to go unpuniſht; nay, theſe, of all others, muſt expect the ſevereſt puniſhments. He tells Chriſtians in the foregoing Verſe, that the *Jews* for tranſgreſſing the Law of *Moſes*, *were to receive a juſt recompence of reward*; *how then*, ſaith he, *ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect the much greater Salvation of the Goſpel*? fairly intimating, that Chriſtians, as they have greater Priviledges and Advantages than others, ſo the abuſe of them will bind them over to proportionably greater Pu-

Puniſhments. It is the obſervation of *Menochus*, that *Joſhua*, when he aggravates the ſin of *Achan*, plays the Herauld, and gives an account of his Pedigree; for we are told, Joſ. 7. 1. *that* Achan *was the Son of* Carmi, *the Son of* Zabdi, *the Son of* Zerah, *of the Tribe of* Judah. Had *Achan* been a poor Ignorant Heathen, his ſin, even in theſe lower circumſtances, would have kindled the Wrath of Heaven, and have pulled down heavy Judgments upon him: But *Achan* that was a *Jew*, and that no mean *Jew*, but of the Royal Tribe of *Judah*, and deſcended from ſuch Noble Progenitors, as *Carmi*, *Zabdi*, and *Zerah*, All Honourable Perſons; for him to commit a Treſpaſs of this Nature; his Priviledges and Advantages loaded his ſin with the heavier Aggravations, and rendred him obnoxious to a double Puniſhment, to wit, that of Lapidation, and the other of Burning, which were both inflicted on him, as we read, *Joſ.* 7. 25. It ſeems God proceeds with Sinners according to the Rules of Diſtributive Juſtice: He proportions his Puniſhments according to their reſpective Priviledges and Advantages. Such

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as have enjoyed leſſer Priviledges, ſhall be beaten with fewer Stripes. The poor *Gentiles* ſtill find a cooler place in Hell than the *Jews*, and the *Jews* than the *Chriſtians*. Hear what St. *Paul* ſaith, Rom. 2. 12. *As many as have ſinned without the Law, ſhall periſh without the Law, and as many as have ſinned in the Law, ſhall be judged by the Law.* As St. *Auſtin* ſpeaks, *the Law of God which* Moſes *delivered to the* Jews, *as it did more clearly diſcover and forbid all manner of Sin, ſo it did ingeminate, or double their guilt.* The poor *Gentile*, who wants the advantages of the *Moſaick* Law, will have the Law of Nature only to anſwer for. But the *Jew* at the day of Judgment will find himſelf condemned both by the Law of Nature, and the Law of *Moſes*; and conſequently, his Guilt will be double, and his Puniſhment ſo much the greater. Hence St. *Paul* tells us, in that ſame, Rom. 2. 9. *That God will render Tribulation and Anguiſh upon every Soul of Man, that doth Evil, of the* Jew *firſt, and alſo of the* Gentile. It ſeems the *Jew* ſhall have the precedence of the *Gentile* in Hell; a curſed kind

kind of precedence, and such, as I fancy, few will be very ambitious of.

Thus you see the *Jew* shall, in Hell, be beaten with more stripes than the *Gentile*: And the Condition of the disobedient *Christian* will be worse than the *Jews*. He has enjoyed greater Advantages than the *Jew*, and must expect greater Punishments: He has the Law of Nature, the Law of *Moses*, and the Law of the Gospel to answer for; and therefore if the Guilt of the *Jew* be double in respect of the *Gentile*, the *Christians* Guilt will be treble, and render him worthy of much sorer Punishment. Hence it is that our Apostle, *Chap.* 10. of this Epistle *Vers.* 28, 29. *If he that despised* Moses's *Law, died without mercy, of how much sorer Punishment shall he be thought worthy, who has trampled under Foot the Son of God*? It's plain the *Christians* Punishment will be greater than the *Jews*; even as great as the Salvation which was offered him; in a word, so great, that St. *Paul*, who had the gift of Tongues, was not able to express it otherwise, than in these most Astonishing Expressions, *of how much sorer Punishment shall he be thought worthy*?

Thus

Thus you ſee, that as there are diverſity of Torments in Hell, ſo the greateſt of them will be the Portion of ſuch ſinners as do neglect the Salvation of the Goſpel; and you will more eaſily believe this Dreadful Doctrin, when I have given you the true Reaſon, of it. And,

1. The Goſpel which bringeth this great Salvation, was firſt Preacht and Publiſht by Chriſt, the Eternal Son of God; and this does mightily aggravate the diſobedience of Chriſtians. God he ſent his Meſſengers, his Prophets, yea ſometimes his Angels to publiſh and deliver the Law unto the *Jews*. But he has ſent his own Eternal Son to Preach and Publiſh the Goſpel to the Chriſtian World; and ſure ſuch a wonderful Inſtance of aſtoniſhing Mercy and Condeſcention, cannot but load the ſins of Chriſtians with the moſt dreadful aggravations. Hear what our Saviour himſelf ſaith, John 15.22. *If I had not come and ſpoken unto them, they had not had ſin, but now they have no Cloak for their ſin.* The ſame Argument is here urged by St. *Paul*, in the Text, *How ſhall we eſcape*, ſaith he, *if we neg-*

lect ſo great Salvation, which at the firſt began to be ſpoken by the Lord? As much as if the Apoſtle ſhould have ſaid, the Goſpel which we, the Miniſters of Chriſt, Preach unto you, it is Chriſts Goſpel, the very ſame that he, in his own Perſon, firſt Preacht and Publiſht to the World. Sure then you will reverence this Eternal Son of God. Sure ye cannot but think it your Duty to obey his Goſpel. As he is the Lord, he may command your Obedience; and as he is your Saviour, who died for you, he does moſt deſerve it. Ye cannot therefore offend againſt this Goſpel, but you muſt affront the higheſt inſtance and demonſtration of God's Love. And what Puniſhments can be great enough to puniſh ſuch Ingratitude? The Heathens, the Jews and Devils themſelves, who are now howling amidſt everlaſting Burnings, they never ſinned againſt ſuch ſtupendious Mercy as Chriſtians do; *Of how much ſorer Puniſhment ſhall they be thought worthy, who trample under Foot the Son of God?*

2. Another Reaſon, why Chriſtians muſt expect the ſevereſt Puniſhments *if they neglect this great Salvation*, is because

cauſe the Light of the Goſpel is greater and clearer than that of the Law. *Eſay* Prophecying of the times of the Goſpel, Chap. 11. 9. Says, *That the Earth ſhall then be full of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea.* St. *Peter* 2 Epiſt. 1. 19. Compares the Light of the Law, *to a dim Light ſhining in a dark place*; alluding, as 'tis thought, to thoſe Candles which were always ſhining in the Temple, becauſe it was a dark place, as having but very ſmall Windows to let in the light of the Sun. But the Light of the Goſpel he compares to the Day, intimating that the Light of the Goſpel does as far exceed the Light of the Law, as the Light of the Sun does that of a Candle. We know the Vail was upon the Face of *Moſes*, and the weighty concerns of Religion were then wrapt up in obſcure Types and Shadows. But the Shadows being now vaniſht, the Sun of Righteouſneſs is riſen, and *Chriſt has brought Life and Immortality to Light, through the Goſpel*, 2 Tim. 1. 10. Thus great is the Light of the Goſpel, and therefore thoſe ſins which are committed againſt it, are the more heinous and damnable ſins againſt Knowledg,

have more of wilfulneſs in them, and argue greater contempt of God. Hence ſuch ſinners are ſaid in Scripture *to reproach the Lord*, Numb. 15. 30. Yea, *to rebel againſt the Light*, Job 24. 13. Since therefore Chriſtians ſin againſt greater Light, they muſt expect ſeverer Puniſhments; *For he that knoweth his Maſters will, and doth it not ſhall be beaten with more ſtripes.*

3. Another reaſon why Chriſtians muſt expect the ſevereſt Puniſhments, *if they neglect this great Salvation*, is becauſe the means of Grace, which the Goſpel affords for the obtaining of this *Salvation*, are now more plentiful than they were before. St. *John* tells us, Chap. 1. 17. *That the Law was given by* Moſes, *but Grace and Truth came by Jeſus Chriſt; of whoſe fulneſs*, ſaith he, Verſe 16. *we all have received, and Grace for Grace*, or Grace upon Grace, to denote the great plenty and abundance of it. The Law could do no more than ſhew Man his Duty, but the Goſpel affords him Grace to perform it. Hence the Preachers of the Goſpel are ſtyled *Able Miniſters of the New Teſtament, not of the Letter, but of the Spirit; for the*

the Letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth Life, 2 Cor. 3. 6. The Law is here called the Letter, and is ſaid to Kill, becauſe it ſhews our Duty, and the Danger of neglecting it, but gives no Grace to help us in the performing of it. But the Goſpel is called the Spirit, becauſe the Spirit of Grace does by his internal Operations, accompany the outward Miniſtration of the Goſpel, and ſo gives us Life.

Thus you ſee what plentiful Means of Grace, the Goſpel affords us for the obtaining of this great *Salvation*: And therefore if we do neglect theſe Means of Grace, our Condemnation, as it will be more juſt, ſo it will be more heavy too. This is plain from our Saviours threatning *Chorazin* and *Bethſaida*, Mat. 11. 21, 22. *Wo unto thee* Chorazin, *wo unto thee* Bethſaida, *for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in* Tyre *and* Sidon, *they would have repented long ago in Sackcloath and Aſhes: But I ſay unto you, it ſhall be more tollerable for* Tyre *and* Sidon, *at the day of Judgment, than for you.* Thus Chriſtians, as they enjoy more plentiful Means of Grace than others; ſo if all

theſe be loſt upon them, they muſt expect the ſeverer Puniſhments.

Thirdly, I come now in the Third and Laſt Place to ſhew you, that Miniſters may very well be allowed to be mighty earneſt and paſſionate in their Exhortations and Admonitions. See how earneſt and paſſionate St. *Paul* is in the Text; with what Vehemency and Fervency of Spirit does he cry out, *How ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great Salvation*? St. *Paul* was one of the greateſt Orators in the World: And he never thought his Oratory better employed, than in the winning Souls to Chriſt. Hence we find him in the *Acts*, Preaching with ſuch Zeal and Eloquence that the Men of *Lycaonia* fancied *Mercury*, their God of Eloquence, was come down from Heaven. And as St. *Paul* was thus Fervent in Spirit, ſerving the Lord, and promoting the Salvation of Souls, ſo 2 Tim. 4. 2. *He charges Miniſters to be Inſtant in Seaſon, and out of Seaſon, Reproving, Rebuking, and Exhorting with all long Suffering*. And in truth what Zeal, what Vehemency can be thought too much for the Pulpit? Indeed the Heathen of old ſaid well,

Stultus

Stultus labor ineptiarum, *It is a ridiculous thing*, ſaid he, *to make a noiſe about Trifles*. But ſure Life and Death, Heaven and Hell, theſe are no Trifles. Men do not well conſider the worth of Souls, and the greatneſs of that Salvation Chriſt has purchaſt for them, when they are offended at the Zeal and Earneſtneſs of Miniſters; when they are angry at the ſeriouſneſs of their Exhortations, or the ſeverity of their Reproofs. But what pity is it, that Hell ſhould be hung with ſuch rich Furniture as the precious Souls of Men? And who would not employ their utmoſt Zeal to ſave ſuch wicked ſinners, as are ready every moment to drop into Hell Fire? Let me therefore with all ſeriouſneſs intreat you *to work out your Salvation with Fear and Trembling*. As you love your own Immortal Souls, and value that Infinite Price which Chriſt has paid for them; as you dread the everlaſting Burnings of the infernal *Tophet*, and earneſtly deſire the endleſs Joys of Heaven, be perſwaded to break off your League with Sin, and make your Peace with Almighty God, that when ye come to die, your Bleſſed Saviour may ſee the travel of his

Soul, and be satisfied; that he may then be as ready to Bestow on you, as he was to Purchase for you; that you may at last obtain this great *Salvation*. Which God grant unto us all, for the sake of Jesus Christ, to whom, *&c.*

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Love of God, &c.

A Sermon,

Preached at the Aſſizes, in *New-Caſtle* upon *Tine*, in the Reign of K. *James* II.

Epheſ. ii. 19, 20. verſ.

Now therefore you are no more ſtrangers and forreigners, but fellow-citizens with the Saints, and of the houſhold of God,

Verſ. 20. *And are built upon the foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets.*

ST. *Paul* having planted the Goſpel among the *Epheſians*, labours in this moſt excellent Epiſtle to confirm them in the ſame, by ſundry Arguments. Some of theſe Arguments are drawn from the conſideration of that wretched

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ed condition they were in before; and ſome from the excellency and bleſſedneſs of their preſent State. Their former condition is diſplayed in all its colours, *ver.* 12. of this chapter, where he tells them, that they were then *without Chriſt*, they were then *Aliens from the common wealth of* Iſrael, *ſtrangers from the covenants of promiſe, having no hope, and without God in the World.* It ſeems ſuch as are without the pale of the Church, are no better than the Children of Wrath; they are expos'd to all the dreadful effects of God's anger in this World, and muſt hereafter be caſt into everlaſting burnings in the next. But tho' this was the lamentable condition of theſe *Epheſians* before their converſion, yet the planting of the Goſpel had made a happy change, for they were now *no more ſtrangers and forreigners, but fellow citizens with the Saints*, they were now delivered from the fears of Eternal damnation, and had a Right and Title to all theſe glorious Priviledges, which *Abraham*, and the other bleſſed Citizens of Heaven, did actually poſſeſs. And what was it which gave them a right and title

to

to all this happiness? If you please to look a little farther into the Text, you'l find it was because they were *of the houshold of God*; or in plain terms Members of the true Church; for this indeed is the true Gospel which enjoys the bright beams of Heavenly light, whilst all the World besides groans under worse than *Ægyptian* darkness: This is the true *Gideons* fleece which is watred with the dew of Celestial Grace, whilst the other parts of the Earth lyes dry and parch'd, not unlike some barren and cursed wilderness. This in St. *Austine*'s comparison is the true Ark in which alone we can be secure from the deluge of God's wrath: Thus great is their happiness who are in the Church of Christ! But some difficulty there is to find out the true Church, as *Tertullian* observed of Old, *faciunt favos & vespæ faciunt Ecclesias & Marcionitæ*, the most dangerous Wasps have their Cells, saith he, even so the worst of Hereticks are ready to cry out the Temple of the Lord are we: That therefore we may not mistake *Leah* for *Rachel*, or embrace a Cloud instead of a *Juno*; we must carefully observe that description

deſcription St. *Paul* gives us of the true Church; he tells us it is founded on the Doctrine of Heaven, or if you had rather take it in the words of the Text, it is; ſaith he, that *houſhold of God which is built upon the foundations of the Apoſtles and Prophets:* From the words thus far explained, I ſhall crave leave to prove theſe four things.

Firſt, That the Doctrine of the Apoſtles and Prophets is the foundation on which the true Church is built.

Secondly, That this Doctrine of the Apoſtles and Prophets is ſufficiently delivered to us in the Holy Scriptures.

Thirdly, That the Church of *England* is *built upon this foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets*; And

Fourthly, That ſuch as continue in the communion of this Church, are as happy as were thoſe *Epheſians* of whom St. *Paul* ſays, they were *no more ſtrangers and forreigners, but fellow-Citizens with the Saints of this houſhold of God.*

I begin with the firſt of theſe, to ſhew you that the Doctrine of the Apoſtles and Prophets, is the only foundation upon which the true Church is

is built: The Church of *Epheſus*, if we'l believe St. *Paul*, was *the houſhold of God*, or a true Church of Chriſt: and it ſeems it was ſo, becauſe *built upon the foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets*; we are ſure theſe inſpired Miniſters of the Holy *Jeſus* preached and planted none but the true Religion, and we may be ſure it can be no bad Church, which owns and profeſſes the ſame Religion. I know there are ſeveral marks given of the true Church, ſuch as Unity, Univerſality, Antiquity, Succeſſion, Sanctity, and the like; but tho' theſe, where they are found, are Great Ornaments to a Church; yet the beſt and moſt infallible mark to know it by, is its conformity to the Doctrines delivered by the Apoſtles: For the true Church as the Apoſtle ſpeaks elſewhere, is *the ground and Pillar of Truth*; but it will not deſerve this honourable Character, if its Doctrines be repugnant to the Doctrines delivered by the Apoſtles. It's ſaid of the beſt and moſt Catholick Chriſtians, *Acts*, 2. 42. *That they continued ſtedfaſt in the Apoſtles Doctrine*: And therefore, ſuch as follow the Primitive

mitive example, will be far from deſerving the brand of Hereticks. Does not our Saviour himſelf tell us, that his Sheep will hear his Voice, and not the Voice of Strangers? And where is this voice of Chriſt to be heard, but ſounding in the writings of theſe Apoſtles and Prophets? This therefore is *the ſure word of Prophecy, whereunto* ſaith St. *Peter, ye do well if you take heed:* nor is this any other mark of the Church of God, then what is generally own'd by the antient Fathers. *Tertullian* brings in the Church ſpeaking ſuch words as theſe, *Sum, Apoſtolorum, ſic teneo, ſicut illi teſtamento caverunt:* I am Heir, ſaith ſhe, to the holy Apoſtles, whatever Truth they left me in their Writings; whatever Doctrines they bequeath'd me in their Teſtament; theſe I firmly believe; theſe I will conſtantly hold. *Ireneus* calls the Goſpel, *columnam & firmamentum Eccleſiæ*, the Ground and Pillar of the Church. St. *Chryſoſtome* treating at large upon this Queſtion, How the true Church may be known? returns this anſwer more than once; *The true Church is beſt known by the holy Scriptures*

tures, ſaith he, that is the Chriſtian Church which agrees with theſe ſacred Oracles: and that is the Heretical which is repugnant to them. None ſpeaks more largely, or more excellently to this point, than the great St. *Auſtine*, who in his admirable Book againſt the *Donatiſts* writes thus, *The queſtion between us and the* Donatiſts *is, where we ſhall find the Church? What therefore ſhall we do? ſhall we ſeek it in our own words? or in the words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt? I think, we had rather ſeek it in his words, who is the truth, and beſt knoweth his own Church. Let not therefore theſe Speeches be heard amongſt us, This I ſay, and this thou ſayeſt; but let us hear, Thus ſaith the Lord: There are certain Books of God to whoſe Authority we both ſtand, we both conſent, we both believe; there let us ſeek the Church, there let us try our cauſe: I will not have the Church demonſtrated by Man's teaching; but by the holy Oracles of God. Setting therefore aſide all ſuch matters, let them ſhew forth the Church, if they can, not by the ſpeech and rumours of the* Africans, *not in the Councils of the Biſhops, not in the Writings of any Diſputer,*

not

not in Viſions and Revelations, not in Signs and falſe Miracles; becauſe God's word has abundantly prepared us, and made us ready againſt theſe things. But let them declare it out of the Preſcript of the Law, the predictions of the Prophets, the Songs of the Pſalms, the teſtimonies of the Apoſtles, the words of the Paſtor himſelf, whether they have a Church or no; let them declare only by the Canonical Books of the holy Scripture; theſe be the inſtructions, theſe be the foundations, theſe be the ſupporters of our cauſe. Thus far St. *Auſtine*, and becauſe he is ſo clear and ſo full to this caſe, I ſhall not need to trouble you with any further Authorities, eſpecially, ſince the Church of *Rome* doth acknowledge in her *Trent* Catechiſm, that no Church is Catholick that does not profeſs that faith which is *built upon the foundation of the Prophets and Apoſtles.* She muſt not hold any new faith, ſay they; but that which was delivered of old by the holy Apoſtles. And it follows in the ſame Catechiſm, the *Nicene* Fathers did well to add the word Apoſtolick to their Creed, ſaying, I believe one Catholick and Apoſtolick Church; namely,

namely, that all might know that is the only true Catholick Church, which is Apoſtolick. That therefore muſt needs be the trueſt mark of the Church, which both *Romaniſts* and Proteſtants own to be ſo: and indeed without this all thoſe other marks which are pretended will ſignifie nothing. Unity without Apoſtolical Doctrine, is ſo far from being a mark of the Church, that it may not only be found in the Societies of the worſt of Men; but of the Devils themſelves: For it is the known ſaying of our Saviour, that Satan's kingdom if it were divided againſt it ſelf, it could not ſtand. Unity indeed is ſuch a bleſſing as the Church of God will earneſtly deſire and pray for: but yet the Church of *Corinth* did not ceaſe to be a true Church, when it wanted this bleſſing, and was torn in peices by diviſions. In vain alſo do ſome Men make Univerſality or largeneſs of extent a mark of the Church: for we are told plainly in the Holy Scriptures, that Chriſt's flock is but a *little flock*, and it is at this day ſo far exceeded in Amplitude, both by *Maho-*

metans and *Pagans*, that if the whole World were divided into thirty Parts, as *Breerwood* calculates in his *Inquiries*, five only would be found *Chriſtians*, ſix *Mahometans*, and nineteen *Pagans*. As for Antiquity, which ſome pretend is the mark of the Church, tho' we may well allow it to be a great Ornament when attended with truth: yet when this is wanting, it is but *vetaſtas erronis*; as St. *Cyprian* calls it, not Age but dotage, nothing but error of a longer ſtanding, and ſo harder to be rooted out. Some alſo are fond of a long Series, or uninterrupted Succeſſion of Biſhops in the Church; but, as St. *Ambroſe* ſpeaks, thoſe who have not St. *Peters* faith, cannot ſucceed to St. *Peters* Inheritance; and ſince the Pontificate of *Aaron* may ſometime deſcend upon a wretched *Caiaphas*, ſuch an antient Pedigree as this may be more honourable in Heraldry than it can be in Religion.

But of all the marks which ſome make of the true Church, that of Holineſs beſt deſerves the name; for the Church of Chriſt ſhould be holy like

like its Head; but when we say the Doctrine of the Apostles and Prophets is the true mark of the Church, we do not exclude, but include Sanctity: for since the Doctrine of the Apostles is, as St. *Paul* defines it; *a Doctrine according unto Godliness*, where this Doctrine is preach'd in its greatest purity, there substantial holiness, free from from all Superstition and Hypocrisie, is most likely to be found; and if such holiness does not at all times flourish alike, the fault is not in the Church, but in the Professors of it: These are reckoned by some the principle marks and Characters of the true Church; but since they are so far from being true marks, that without Apostolical Doctrine they signifie little; I hope, you will allow me to conclude according to the Sense of the holy Scriptures and the Ancient Fathers; That the Doctrine of the Apostles and Prophets is the only foundation on which the true Church is built: I come now in the next place to shew you, That this Doctrine of the Apostles and Prophets upon which the true Church is built;

is sufficiently delivered to us in the holy Scriptures. Whatever Doctrines are contained in these sacred Oracles, are own'd by the Church of *Rome*, as well as by us, to be the Doctrines of the Apostles and Prophets: but they are pleased to charge the holy Scriptures with imperfection, pretending that they contain not all things necessary to Salvation; but must be aided by their unwritten and uncertain Tradition: but sure if there were any such Traditions handed down from the Apostles through the several Ages of the Church to this present Age; these Traditions must needs pass thro' the hands of the Ancient Fathers, before they could come to ours: but the Ancient Fathers knew no such Traditions, but every where assert the Perfection and Sufficiency of the holy Scriptures. *Ireneus* calls the holy Scriptures such a Rule of Faith, as none must vary from. St. *Chrysostome* says, that all things that are necessary are plain and manifest in the holy Scriptures. *Non credimus, quia non legimus*, we believe no more than we read, saith

saith St *Jerome*. I shall only add the Authority of St. *Basil*, who saith, it is contrary to Faith, and a certain argument of Pride, to reject any thing contained in the Scriptures, or to impose any thing that is not written there: Thus the Fathers knew nothing of any unwritten Traditions; that were to cut out the holy Scriptures, but they refer us to them, as to a perfect Rule. And well indeed they might, since St. *Paul* tells us they *are able to make us wise unto Salvation*: and he adds more fully yet, if it be possible to do so, when he tells us, they *are able to make the man of God perfect, throughly furnished unto every good work*. Thus great is the perfection of these holy Oracles, and thus plain it is, that the Doctrine of the Apostles and Prophets, on which the true Church is built, is fully and sufficiently delivered to us in the holy Scripture. I come in the

Third place to shew you, that the Church of *England* is built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets. King *Charles* the First, as he was not unwilling to dye a Martyr for the

Church of *England*; ſo at his death he left her the richeſt legacy he could, even the moſt honourable Character that could poſſibly be beſtowed on the beſt of Churches; for this advice he gave to his Royal Sons, *The beſt profeſſion of Religion I have ever eſteemed that of the Church of* England; *I tell you I have tried it; and after much ſearch and many diſputes, I have concluded it to be the beſt in the World, as coming neareſt to the word of God for Doctrine, and the Primitive example for Government.* Whoſoever does but look into the Articles of our Church will find how well ſhe deſerves this moſt honourable Character: For ſhe profeſſes to believe the Holy Scriptures, which (as I ſhewed above) contains the whole Doctrine of the Apoſtles and Prophets. She believes the ſame Faith, and no other than that which is comprized in the Apoſtles *Creed*, and explained more largely in thoſe *Creeds* which are called the *Nicene* and the *Athanaſian*. And as for thoſe Doctrines which are controverted between us and the Church of *Rome*, a little examination will diſcover

cover which Church is *built upon the foundation of the Apostles and the Prophets.*

And (1.) Let us examine that Supremacy which the Church of *Rome* does challenge for St. *Peter:* If we look into the Holy Scriptures, we shall find nothing there that makes St. *Peter* the chief of the Apostles: For if Christ had ever intended St. *Peter* any such Power over the rest, he would doubtless have declared so much when the Apostles were at strife *who should be the greatest?* But so far is our Saviour from declaring St. *Peters* Supremacy, that he chides them for their vain strife and contention; yea tells them in plain terms, that it should not be among them as in secular Kingdoms and Monarchies, where one is chief. And if St. *Peter* had at any time afterwards been made a Prince, we cannot imagin St. *Paul* could have been ignorant of it, and yet he tells us, 2. *Cor.* 11. 5. *That he was not behind the very chiefest Apostles.* We read also, *Gal.* 2. 9, 11. that he did not only rebuke St. *Peter* openly at *Antioch*, but also took of him *the right*

hand of fellowſhip: Now we cannot ſuppoſe St. *Peters* Supremacy, but we muſt convict St. *Paul*, either of groſs Ignorance, when he ſaid *he was not a whit behind the very chiefeſt Apoſtles*; or of greater rudeneſs when he took place of his Prince: and yet ſo true it is, that he did ſo, that in memory of it, the Popes own Seal hath St. *Paul* and St. *Peter* engraven upon it, and St. *Paul* is allowed to hold the dexter point.

2. If we examin by Scripture, that Controverſie between the Church of *England* and the Church of *Rome*, about the Depoſing Doctrine; we ſhall find which is *built upon the foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets.* For how does the Scripture every where abhor and deteſt that moſt diſloyal and Antichriſtian Doctrine! *Let every Soul be ſubject to the higher Powers*, ſaith St. *Paul*; and that *not only for wrath, but alſo for Conſcience ſake.* Obſerve, *Let every Soul*, of what rank, quality, or degree ſoever, Κἂν Ἀπόστολος ᾖς κἂν Εὐαγγελιστὴς, κἂν Προφήτης, κἂν ὅστις ἦν, ſays St. *Chryſoſtome* upon theſe words, *Tho thou art an Apoſtle, tho an Evangeliſt, tho a Prophet,*

phet, yea what ever thou art, thou must be subject to the higher Powers. Thus saith St. *Paul*, yea St. *Peter* also, from whom the Pope pretends to derive his Power, is so far from challenging any power over Kings and Princes, either for himself or Successors; that he requires Christians to *submit* themselves not unto him, but *unto the King as Supreme.* Nay, he would have them be subject *not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.* And is not this the Apostolical Doctrine of the Church of *England*, which teaches all her Members to pay active obedience unto all the lawful Commands of Princes; and when their commands interfere with the Laws of God, not to resist, but to obey Passively?

3. The Prayers of our Church are made in a Language well known unto the People, and such as will tend (if they are not wanting to themselves) to their Edification. And sure I need not tell you, that this is agreeable to the Doctrine of the Apostles, when St. *Paul* hath spent a whole Chapter to assure us of it: For in 1. *Cor.* 14. 14.

If

If I pray (ſaith he) *in an unknown Tongue, my Spirit prays, but my underſtanding is unfruitful*; but I will pray with the Spirit, *and I will pray with the underſtanding alſo.* Again, ver. 16. *How ſhall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned ſay Amen at thy giving of thanks; ſeeing he underſtandeth not what thou ſayſt?* Again, v. 19. *In the Church I had rather ſpeak five words with my underſtanding, that by my voice I might teach others alſo, than ten thouſand words in an unknown Tongue.* Theſe are plain Texts of Scripture, and ſhew the practice of our Church to be Apoſtolical.

4. The Church of *England* allows the Laity the Cup as well as the Bread; and this is no other Doctrine than what Chriſt and his Apoſtles teach. For our Saviour delivering the Cup to his Diſciples, ſays, *Drink ye all of it. Mat. 26. 27.* And S. *Paul* aſſures us, that in his time the People partook of the Cup as well as of the Bread. 1 *Cor.* 12. 13. *We have all been made to drink into one Spirit.* But I need not produce any more Texts of Scripture for

for the proof of this, ſince it is acknowledged by the Church of *Rome*: For in the Council of *Conſtance* we find theſe expreſſions, *Notwithſtanding the Inſtitution of Chriſt, and the Practice of the Apoſtles, we decree and determine that the Laity ſhall not partake of the Cup.* It ſeems they find ſome inconvenience in the Inſtitution of Chriſt, and the Practice of his Apoſtles: but our Church thinks it convenient to ſtick cloſe to both.

5. The Church of *England* condemns Tranſubſtantiation, as being contradictory to Senſe, Reaſon, and Scripture. Our Senſes tell us it is Bread and not Fleſh after Conſecration. Our Reaſon will not allow one and the ſame body to be in millions of places at the ſame time: And as for Scripture, S *Paul*, 1. *Cor.* 11. 26. *&c.* calls it Bread at leaſt three times after Conſecration. But tho we have all this to ſay for our ſelves, yet we are anathamatized by the Church of *Rome*, becauſe we refuſe, as they ſay, to believe as plain words as any are in the Bible. For what can be plainer, ſay they,

they, than these words of our Saviour; *This is my body?* But in truth, if these words were as plain as they tell us, we would be content to sacrifice both our Sense, and our Reason to our Faith. But if these words of our Saviour be taken in a literal Sense, as they take them, they are so far from being plain, that their Learned men are very much divided about the meaning of them. For ask them only what is the subject of the Proposition, or what is denoted by this demonstrative Pronoun *Hoc* or *This*; and you will find them mightily at a loss about it; for *Scotus* says, it is *Hoc ens*, this entity is my body; *Aquinas* this substance; *Bellarmine* these species of bread; the *Sarbone* this *Individuum vagum*, and the famous *Glossary*, *Hoc nihil*, or this nothing. Now if these words of our Saviour were so very plain and easie, as they say; 'Tis very strange their Learned men should differ so much, and at last make nothing of them. But indeed, if we take them in a figurative sense, as Protestants use to do, they will be plain and easie enough:

For

For the demonstrative particle *Hoc* or *This* must needs relate to bread; for it is said in the Text, that *as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the Disciples, and said Take, Eat, This is my body.* It seems what our Saviour took, blessed, brake, and gave to his Disciples, was bread; and of this and nothing else can he speak, when he saith, *This is my body.* Now this bread is my body, is false, if we take it in a literal sense; for bread is not flesh; but it is true in a Figurative sense, This bread is, *i. e.* does signifie Christs body. And this kind of Dialect or manner of speech is very usual in Scripture. *Gen.* 41. 26. we read these words concerning *Pharaohs* Dream, *The seven kine are seven* years, *i. e.* they signifie seven years. So again *Exod.* 12. 11. *Moses* speaking of the Paschal Lamb, says *it is the Lords Passover, i. e.* it signifies the Lords passing the Children of the *Israelites*, when he destroyed all the First-born of *Egypt*. Now if, according to this known Dialect of Scripture, we interpret our Saviours words, *This is my*

body,

body, the meaning will be plain and natural, this bread does signifie or represent my body. And this will appear to be the sense of these words, if we consider what our Saviour says of the Cup, namely, *This is my blood*, which must be taken in this Figurative sense, this Cup represents my blood: For it follows presently after, *I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine*, saith Christ, *until that day when I drink it new with you in my fathers kingdom*. The fruit is called sometimes the blood of the Grape; but sure without a figure it cannot be called the blood of Christ. Thus you see that our Church is Apostolical also in denying Transubstantiation.

6. The Adoration of the Host is accounted by the Church of *England* a most dangerous crime; for since, as you have heard, there is no Transubstantiation, but it remains bread, we dare not pay our Adoration to it which we believe a Creature; for it is the plain Doctrine of our Saviour, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

7. The Church of *England* in condemning

demning the Worship of Images, condemns only what the Apostles and Prophets had condemned before; for this charge is given in the Second Commandment, *Thou shalt not make unto thy self any graven Image, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth; thou shalt not bow down to them nor worship them.* Here we are forbid, and that in most comprehensive terms, the making of any Image whatsoever to Worship it. It is not said, Thou shalt not make Images of Idols or false Gods; but it is said, *Thou shalt not make any graven Image, nor the likeness of any thing.* To make an Image of the true God is a violation of this Commandment; for the Golden Calves are condemned in Scripture, notwithstanding the Children of *Israel* worshiped the true God under those representations. Our Church therefore doth not allow her Members to picture God the Father in the likeness of an Old Man, or the Holy Ghost in the similitude of a Bird or Dove. For God is a Spirit, yea an infinitely glorious Spirit, and consequently

ly cannot be pictured without an injury; but to worſhip ſuch Pictures or Images, is as S. *Paul* ſpeaks, *Rom.* 1. *to change the glory of the incorruptible God into an Image made like unto corruptible Man*, and to Birds.

8. The Church of *England* does alſo juſtly condemn the Invocation of Saints by mental and vocal Prayers, as the *Trent* Council enjoyns. This Doctrine of the Church of *Rome* by the confeſſion of Learned Papiſts, hath neither Precept nor Example in Scripture to warrant it, and conſequently it cannot be built upon the foundation of the Text, i. e. *the foundation of Apoſtles and Prophets* The Temple of old was called *the houſe of Prayer*, to denote that Religious Prayer is a principal part of the Worſhip of God; and does not our Saviour ſay expreſly, *Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve?* To hear mental Prayers belongs only to God, *who alone trieth the reins and ſearcheth the heart*; and therefore to make ſuch Prayers unto Creatures, is to make them more than Creatures. The Saints muſt be Omnipreſent, if they can

hear

hear all their Votaries, who pray to them in all quarters of the Earth: Now Omnipresence is an Attribute which belongs to the Divine Essence. *Thou art a God that heareth Prayers*, saith the Psalmist, and therefore *unto thee shall all flesh come.* We are told in Scripture that *there is but one Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus*; and since he is most willing and *able to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by him*, we do not use the Intercessions of the Saints, for fear we should injure the merits of that All-sufficient Mediatour, *who ever liveth to make intercession for us.*

By these few Instances which I have given, and I might have given you many more, it cannot but be evident to all serious unprejudiced persons, that the Church of *England* keeps close to the Rule of the Scripture, and like the Church of *Ephesus* in the Text, *is built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets.* And because the Testimony of an Adversary has always been thought considerable, I shall conclude this head with the Testimony of Pope *Paul* IV. who, as Bishop *Andrews* Re-

ports, made this offer to Q. *Elizabeth*, that if ſhe would but own his Supremacy, he would confirm our way of ſerving God in all things appertaining to his Worſhip in the very ſame manner as we now do. Sure this Holy Father would never have confirmed the Religion of the Church of *England*, had he not thought it conſonant to the Doctrine of the Apoſtles. But ſince he was pleaſed to offer his Confirmation, we will requite his kindneſs by valuing our Church the more upon his Approbation.

Thus I have diſpatcht the Three Generals I propoſed. I have ſhewn you, That the Doctrine of the Apoſtles and Prophets is the only Foundation upon which the True Church is built; That this Doctrine of the Apoſtles and Prophets is ſufficiently delivered to us in the Holy Scripture, and that the Church of *England*, like that of *Epheſus* in the Text, is built upon this and no other foundation.

I ſhall now in the cloſe, leave a word or two of Exhortation with you, and beſeech you to continue ſtedfaſt in

in the Communion of the Church of *England*. It is the chief design of St. *Paul* in this Epistle, to keep the *Ephesians* stedfast in the Faith of Christ: He *desires them* Chap. 3. *not to faint*; and *bows his knees to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*; that he would strengthen them *by his Spirit in the inner Man*; He bids them *Chap.* 4. have a care they were *no more Children tossed to and fro with every wind of Doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lye in wait to deceive*. As he would not have them scared out of their Religion, by fear of Persecution; so neither would he have them gull'd of it by the sleights and subtleties of false Teachers. It is therefore our duty, when we have found the True Church, to continue stedfast in the Communion of it. We must resemble those best of Christians, of whom it is said, *Acts* 2. 42. *That they continued stedfast in the Apostles Doctrine and fellowship*: But alas! how apt are men to barter away Religion for some worldly emolument? How many are there who

carry their Religion in their Pockets, and ſtick not with *Judas* to betray their Maſter for Thirty pieces of Silver; unleſs perhaps their Covetouſneſs be greater, and a larger ſum be requiſite to patch up their broken Fortunes. If *Naamans* Preferment be inconſiſtent with his Religion, you muſt allow him a diſpenſation, and permit him to bow in the Houſe of *Rimmon*: and to name no more, rather than *Pilate* will hazard the loſs of *Cæſars* favour, he will pronounce our Saviour innocent one hour, and condemn him the next. Thus Chriſt is made to truckle under the World, and Gain will be Godlineſs in ſpight of the Bible. But thoſe that are ſober and ſerious in the World, they will remember ſuch Texts of Scripture as theſe, *Prove all things, hold faſt that which is good.* 1. Theſſ. 5. 21. Take heed, *leſt ye being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own ſtedfaſtneſs.* 2. Pet. 3. 17. Nay St. *Jude* carries the duty one ſtep higher, and tells us we muſt *contend earneſtly for the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints.*

Miniſters

Miniſters muſt contend by their Tongues and Pens; Magiſtrates and Gentry by their Power, Intereſt and Authority; and private Chriſtians by their Prayers and open Profeſſion of it. And if St. *Jude* would have the Primitive Chriſtians not barely own, but even *contend*, and that *earneſtly for the faith*, when they groaned under the heavy Perſecutions of Pagan Emperours; ſure we have little reaſon to be afraid to do ſo, who live under the Protection of a moſt gracious King.

And ſince theſe things are ſo, I hope, I ſhall need no more than theſe two Motives to back the Exhortation, and to enforce the Duty.

1. Let us conſider, The great happineſs of ſuch as continue ſtedfaſt in the Faith of Chriſt, and Doctrine of the Apoſtles.

2. The lamentable condition of thoſe that ſhall dare to diſown it.

1. Let us conſider the great Happineſs of ſuch as continue ſtedfaſt in the Faith of Chriſt and Doctrine of the Apoſtles. As the Church of Chriſt is that Golden Candleſtick which holds

forth the light of the Goſpel, ſo it is the Treaſurer of all the Riches of Heaven; for to it belong the Adoption and the Glory; to it appertain the Covenants, the Service of God, and all the Promiſes. Here we may enjoy all the Ordinances of God, and *ſatisfie our Souls with the marrow and fatneſs* of his Sanctuary. Yea, if we will believe our Apoſtle in the Verſes following my Text, every Chriſtian does now *grow into an holy Temple in the Lord*, he becomes an habitation where God vouchſafes to dwell, and manifeſt his ſpecial Preſence by the ſaving Operations of his Holy Spirit. Happy Souls! who have the Honour and the Privilege to lodge and entertain their God! What Joys and Comforts will now crowd into the Soul, and attend this glorious Gueſt! And yet all this is only a preparatory for much greater Happineſs: For theſe happy Believers, as our Apoſtle ſpeaks, are now become *fellow citizens with the Saints*; ſuch are here *of the houſhold of God*; and if they make a juſt improvement of that Grace which is afforded them, they ſhall hereafter

hereafter be admitted into the Society and Fellowship of Saints and Angels. And what Tongue is able to express this Happiness! How great an Honour, how great a Priviledge was it thought of Old to be a free Citizen of *Rome*, and to have a right to all the Offices and Franchises of that Imperial City? So highly valuable was this Freedom, that the chief Captain in the *Acts* tells us, he did not obtain it but with a great sum of Mony. To these Priviledges, S. *Paul* alludes, when he tells the *Ephesians*, and in them all Christians; that if they are *of the houshold of God, and built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets*, then they are *fellow citizens with the Saints*, that is, Denizons of Heaven, and free of that City, which is above, even the heavenly *Jerusalem*. *Glorious things are spoken of thee, O thou City of God.* St. *Paul* tells us, *Heb.*12. *That here dwell an innumerable company of glorious Angels, the general Assembly of the First-born*, That is, the Holy Apostles the First-born of the Gospel, *the Spirits* of Prophets, Martyrs,

Confeſſors, and all thoſe *juſt men* that are already *made perfect*. Nay farther yet, here God the Judge of all vouchſafes his glorious Preſence, and Jeſus the Mediatour of the New Covenant appears in all his Glory. To be Citizens therefore of this Heavenly *Jeruſalem*, is to enjoy the moſt raviſhing Society of Saints and Angels, to be admitted to the Beatifick Viſion of God himſelf, and to live for ever in Paradiſe with the Holy Jeſus. It is to lye with *Lazarus* in *Abrahams* boſom, feeding continually on the feaſt of the Lamb, and drinking of thoſe *Rivers of pleaſures*, which ran *at Gods right hand for evermore*. This one would think ſhould be argument enough to make us *hold faſt the profeſſion of our Faith ſteadfaſt unto the end*. But if all this will not prevail with us, I know nothing that can, unleſs it be what I propoſed to be conſidered in the

2d. place, Namely the Lamentable condition of thoſe who dare diſown and deny the Truths of the Goſpel. And I cannot give you a truer proſpect

pect of their ſad condition than in the words of our Saviour. *Mat.* 10. 33. *Whoſoever ſhall deny me* or be aſhamed of my words, *before men, him will I deny before my Father and his holy Angels.* How many Woes are crowded into this one ſentence, *I will deny him?* It is, to ſay no more, a compendious expreſſion of Hell, an Eternity of torments comprized in a word. Oh the ineffable horror that will ſeize the poor Sinner, when he ſtands arraign'd before the Tribunal of Heaven! When at the great Aſſize, at the laſt day, he ſhall ſee his very Advocate become his Accuſer, and hear his Sentence pronounced by his merciful Saviour; the very hearing of it will be a kind of Hell, and the Promulgation of the Puniſhment anticipate the Execution.

And now, if I could give you a lively repreſentation of the guilt and horror on the one hand, and paint out eternal Wrath and Vengeance on the other; I might then hope to ſhew you the condition of ſuch a Sinner,

Sinner, as ſhall be thus diſowned and denied by his Saviour. But alas! this is not all; we ſhall find more ingredients of horror in this Condemnation, if we conſider that Chriſt threatens to deny ſuch a Sinner before his Father and the Holy Angels.

If there could be any room for comfort after the Sentence of Damnation, it would be this, of being executed in ſecret: But it ſeems the Sinners folly muſt be laid open before God and his Holy Angels, and all his baſeneſs ript up before the whole World. Chriſt will now in the preſence of God the Father, of Men and of Angels, compare himſelf who was denied, and the Cauſe for which he was denied together; he will now parallel his infinite Merits with a Luſt, and lay Eternity in the ballance with a Trifle; he will now propoſe that worthy price for which he was denied, he will hold it up to open view; he will call upon Men and Angels, ſaying, Behold that piece of dirt, that windy

windy applauſe, that corruptible dower, that poor tranſitory ſatisfaction, for which I was diſhonoured, and my Truths diſowned; for which Life, Eternity and God himſelf was ſcorned, yea trampled on by this vile wretched Sinner. Judge all the World, whether what he deſpiſed in the other Life, he deſerves to enjoy in this. How will the vile wretched Sinner then crawl forth, and appear in all his filth? He will then call in vain upon the Mountains to cover him, and the Rocks to hide him.

FINIS.

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